WITH RUSSIAN JAPANESE AND CHUNCHUSE

ERNEST BRINDLE

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THE EXPERIENCES OF AN ENGLISHMAN DURING THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

BY ERNEST BRINDLE

WITH A MAP

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FOREWORD

THE chapters in this book deal with phases of the Russo-Japanese War with which I became acquainted last year while acting in the Far East as the special correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, and with subjects which a three years' residence in China gives me some authority to speak upon. Two of the chapters are amplified from articles that have appeared in the *Daily Mail*, and the one entitled "A Tragic Experience" appeared in a different form in the *Daily Telegraph*. To the proprietors of both these journals I am indebted for permission to republish the articles in question.

E. B.

March, 1905.

TO

SIR ALFRED HARMSWORTH

BART.

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WITH RUSSIAN, JAPANESE, AND CHUNCHUSE

CHAPTER I

PORT ARTHUR ON THE EVE OF WAR

On the morning of February 8th, 1904, the Russian Pacific Squadron lay at anchor in the roadstead outside the harbour of Port Arthur. It was a glorious day of sunshine, and the chill air infused one with a vigour and an elation of spirit in direct harmony with the scene. The summits of the bare and rugged heights of the Liautung Peninsula glowed white in the dazzling light, while the forts on the spur known as Tiger's Tail stared out across the sea in grim defiance. Ten miles on the east side of the promontory was a cruiser at target practice, and the thunderous roll, minute by minute repeated, unconsciously preluded the more serious work which was so soon to follow.

The sound of bugle calls incessantly smote upon the ear, steam-launches and row-boats from the great ships of the fleet kept up a constant communication with the shore, merchant steamers impatient of detention in quarantine swung fretfully at their moorings, and an occasional Chinese junk under all sail moved slowly into the harbour. It was an animated spectacle, and as I was being rowed ashore from my steamer I thought to myself that in that home of giant cliff and mountain, tumbled rock and sea-girt shore, there, in the fortress considered by the military experts of the world as impregnable, must the power be enthroned which is to rule the Far East. So must have thought the occupant of another boat proceeding at the same time as my own towards the jetty, a uniformed Japanese official of my acquaintance. He was alert and smiling, and gazed at everything in his ken with the keenest interest.

"Good-morning," I shouted out to him. "Where are you going? This does not look much like war."

"I am going to see Admiral Alexeieff and arrange to bring away the Japanese residents.

Our Minister has been recalled from St. Petersburg, and the Japanese Government instructed me to come here and look after our people."

Then he passed on in his boat propelled by six sturdy Chinamen, leaving me eager and anxious to be on shore and hear the news. I had been three days in quarantine, and was ignorant until that moment of the rupture of diplomatic relations between Russia and Japan. I soon reached the far limit of the harbour, and leaving the boat, clambered up the few uneven steps which did duty for people landing, and at once saw unmistakable signs of change since my visit of the previous week. Most of the foreign inhabitants appeared to be out of doors, driving, walking, or standing in groups on the bund and at street corners engaged in animated conversation. At every turning I met Siberian troops, in full marching order, some slouching along with dejected appearance or with scowling faces, some bright and happy, singing patriotic songs and swinging their bodies to a proud step. The occasional blare of a band made itself heard above the din of confused noises, and the shrill cry of a bugle in some distant fort

perched high on a hill told of alert summons to duty. The yards and wharves near the harbour were filled with coal to their utmost capacity, and the black fuel of war was even being stacked on the bund.

Two gunboats without their war paint, old and white, with yellow funnels, steamed slowly towards the entrance of the naval basin to join their bigger consorts, their decks crowded with men. Piles of goods stood in the streets in front of the Japanese shops and private houses, many of the things being sold at less than cost prices. Pathetic it was to see these sales and watch the women and children, huddled together over their household possessions, awaiting transport to the steamer which was to take them back to Japan. In a certain street a Japanese barber was the last one of the departing crowd to leave his shop, in which perchance he had gleaned much information from indiscreet and talkative Russian officers. He attended me, and I asked him what he was going to do upon his return to his own country.

"This is my country," he replied, with a peal of merry laughter. That was all he said, and

upon reflection I concluded that he could not have made a better reply.

In the passage of that day I saw and heard a great deal, which convinced me that while Russia expected war she had no idea that it would come before she was ready for it—in other words, until she herself drew the sword.

For three years I had been engaged in newspaper work in China, and during that time had had excellent opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of the working of Russian diplomacy in China and Japan. In the autumn of 1903 I visited Japan, and subsequently went several times to Port Arthur, with a view to studying the position on the spot round which gathered so many interests. From conversations I had there with Russian officials and civilians, I made up my mind that the Japanese, from what I knew of them, would spring a surprise upon their enemy because of his utter inability to appreciate the difference between them and the Chinese, whom he had overawed into a state of abject fear. Before the war Russia was at the zenith of her power in China. What her Minister said in Peking was listened to with a trembling subservience by the corrupt

Government there, and this, coupled with the extraordinary solicitude shown by the foreign Powers to retain the good will of the northern colossus at apparently any cost, made that Power overlook, or ignore, the true meaning of the awakened national spirit of Japan.

And even on the memorable February 8th, in Port Arthur there was the same complacent belief as in Russia that everything was right with the policy inaugurated at the conclusion of the war between Japan and China, and pursued by successive Ministers at the Foreign Office in St. Petersburg. The bustle of warlike preparation, the departure of civilians by the score, what did it all mean? To the Russian military official, that he was going to make war on Japan; he did not remember to think of the chance of the Japanese official being animated by a similar aspiration with a reversal of the positions.

"The Japanese are mad," cried M. Plancon, the civil secretary of the Viceroy, a few days before the war: but after making this extraordinary pronouncement he was careful to explain that he, like his chiefs, did not believe in the imminence of war. Haste in preparing for

the annexation of Corea and the invasion of Japan was deprecated as being unnecessary and undignified in view of the status of the enemy; but in spite of this opinion much money changed hands, presumably going into the pockets of army and navy contractors.

The Japanese official who superintended the departure of his fellow countrymen from Port Arthur on the eve of war lunched with Viceroy Alexeieff, and then went on to Dalny to pick up the Japanese there in the steamer chartered by him for the purpose. With him, disguised as his valet, was a Japanese naval officer of brilliant talents, who, we may be sure, used his brief sojourn in the fortress to inestimable advantage.

That afternoon there arrived by train several hundred Russian naval recruits for the fleet. Their average age could not have been more than twenty years, and their appearance suggested that they had come straight from the village and the farm. To meet them at the railway station was a naval guard under the charge of a smart young officer, whose face was a study of conflicting emotions as his new charges showed by their behaviour

a complete ignorance of the meaning of the commands given to them. They swarmed in frightened disorder over the platform, and much invective language and rough treatment were necessary to bring them into line. Then they were marched away to the harbour, laughed at and pitied by the passers-by in the streets. With such raw material did the Russian Government supply the needs of its fleet a few hours before the start of a modern naval battle.

Before evening a mild sensation was caused by the issue of an order calling on the reservists in Port Arthur to rejoin their regiments, most of which were attached to the garrison of the fortress. The immediate effect was to hasten the departure of residents whose business interests were threatened with destruction by the imminence of war.

Later on in the day, when the restaurants and places of amusement were thronged with naval and military officers flushed and exultant at the prospects offered by the future, I passed down the streets to the jetty. The wind was rising, and snow fell in icy particles. Down the bund dashed droshkies,

the drivers, muffled up in thick coats and furs, lashing at the galloping horses with long whips. Doors of houses opened, letting fall globes of light on the rough pavement, and disclosing to view men and women, jolly and comfortable, sitting round the tables on which stood meats and drinks in plenty. The sound of song and laughter made itself heard above the noises of the traffic in the streets and in the restless harbour. Lights flashed, bells tinkled, people moved along intent to satisfy their feverish desires; all spoke resonantly of life, and in the tumult no ear caught the whisper of Death the sentinel.

The restaurant, known to everybody who has been to Port Arthur, situated off the bund and commanding a view of the harbour, was filled with people, and I went in to wish my friends who were there a farewell. The place was crowded, and the loungers talked, talked, talked of nothing but war. The fleet was going to sail on the morrow for Japan; a great army was nearing the Yalu, and the formal annexation of Corea would take place at once; Japan would be invaded in less than a month, after the Cossacks had made mincemeat of the yellow

soldiers: Russia, in short, was going to crush her insolent foe on land and sea in the shortest time possible commensurate with the wishes of her fighting men, who were not disposed to hurry over the duties awaiting them. The last man I shook hands with on leaving the restaurant was a young officer of engineers, since killed in action, bright, merry, gifted, and overflowing with vitality. I wished him good luck, telling him to take care of himself in the fighting. His only fear was that there would be no war; he held the belief of the majority of his own class that Japan would never dare to enter upon a contest against the mighty power of his country.

Securing a miserable little sampan, or Chinese row-boat, at the jetty, I started on my way down the harbour to my steamer, which was anchored in among the men-of-war. The pole, flat at the end, which does duty for an oar in a sampan is called a "yuloh" by the Chinese. Its handle is fixed between two spikes on the edge of the stern of the boat, and its flat end, placed in the water, is worked backwards and forwards, the resulting progression of the sampan not being notorious for speed.

I protected myself from the cold as much as possible by squatting down in the bows of the sampan, but this position so cramped my limbs that I was glad to rise up and sit on the narrow seat. The harbour was full of launches; but as no lights were allowed to be shown after eight o'clock at night, except on Government owned vessels, my diminutive craft was in continual danger of being run into and smashed to splinters. For self-preservation I ordered one of the coolies to light his lantern, made of horn, with a candle as illuminant. The lantern was, however, in such a state of dirtiness that I doubt if any one could have seen its light from a distance of twenty yards; but I nevertheless took the precaution of concealing it from view as we passed the guardship.

Once out of the narrow channel and in the roadstead, alight with the glare of searchlights, I quickly found my ship, and went on board. The passengers numbered twenty foreigners and nine hundred Chinese coolies. The coolies were huddled up on the decks, crowding as close together as they could for warmth. As they sat there, many with but the thinnest garments on their shivering bodies, the flying spray of

tossing waves was dashed over them. They occasionally all wailed in chorus, the effect being intensely weird. To hear their noisy grief made one shudder, wrought upon one's nerves. I went down to my cabin, returning above when the sounds of trampling feet, hoarse calls, and clanking iron told me that we were about to start, to take my last look at the mighty engines of war lying within a few yards of the ship, glowing with lights from stem to stern, from decks to mastheads, and shooting lanes of dazzling brilliance from their eyes of fire through the darkness of the night. On the extreme left was the *Sevastopol*, grim and gigantic, the searchlight on her mizzen glaring straight down into the foam-capped waters. She was to be one of the first to receive a wound, as she was also fated to be the last one left living of her consorts, and, after a gallant fight with no chance of rescue, to plunge down to death. Behind her, with turrets just catching the reflection of the searchlights on Golden Hill, lay the *Petropavlovsk*. A few short weeks later and she went to her doom, taking with her to the bottom of the gulf, while thousands of men gazed at the spectacle speechless with horror,

the learned and gallant Makaroff, greatest of the admirals of Russia; that Viking among painters, Verestchagin, remembered by the Russian sailors because of his long, white hair, his noble face, his many acts of kindness; and seven hundred poor fellows of whom the world never heard, but in thinking of whom their captain, rescued by a miracle, went mad, and died in three days after the event. Farther down the line were the *Poltava* and the *Peresviet*, and farther still loomed the huge shapes of the *Retvisan* and the *Tsarevitch*. Battleships, cruisers, gunboats, and smaller vessels were all there in proud array, a mighty host; and yet to-day, except a battered few which managed to escape destruction and capture, they are so many thousand tons of scrap-iron.

We left the fleet behind us and steered for the open sea, but an hour had elapsed before we had escaped from the pursuing beams of light.

Two hours later the Japanese torpedo-boats made their sudden and dramatic onslaught against the Russian ships, and the great war of the Far East commenced with a naval victory for Japan. From the demoralisation of that attack

in the night the Russian fleet never recovered, and, cooped up in the narrow spaces of the harbour, to which they always returned after disastrous sorties, the ships lost whatever effective powers of offence they might have displayed under more favourable conditions. The last chance the fleet had of success died with Makaroff, who never had an opportunity to fully reveal his abilities as an admiral.

Inside the fortress the small garrison, expectant of an attempt to carry the forts by storm, stood at their posts with mixed feelings. They could not have numbered ten thousand on that fatal night, owing to causes brought about by distorted views entertained by the authorities at home, in utter disregard of the advice of General Kuropatkin, of the capacities of the Japanese to wage war against Russia. Thus, when the war came, several regiments forming part of the garrison of the fortress were on their way towards the Corean frontier. For several days a process of depletion had been at work, and not only men, but stores of all kinds were being diverted from their intended uses and appropriated for the troops in the field. So confident was the belief in the impregnability of Port Arthur that the

supposition of an opening attack by the Japanese on the fortress never suggested itself to the minds of the men responsible for its safety; they erred in over-confidence. So unprepared was the General Staff for that attack that if Port Arthur had been cut off from communication with the north Admiral Togo could have taken it that night. This opinion has been freely expressed by Russian officers who fought throughout the siege. But the Russian ships alone suffered injury, and before it was isolated from the outside world, Port Arthur was being fed night and day with the materials necessary to render completely effective its marvellous chain of defence works. The regiments marching to Corea returned; train after train arrived from far-away Russia with troops, skilled workmen, artillery, all kinds of machinery, ammunition, stores, doctors, and nurses. When the last train had left the town and the Japanese forces had established a ring of men, guns, and ships round the fortress on land and sea, it was with confidence that the besieged garrison looked forward to the future. Nothing had yet occurred to destroy the universal belief in the might of the Russian arms on land, and the relief of Port

Arthur was regarded as being only a matter of time by those who knew something of the enormous strength of the fortress.

A description of the attack, so sudden and unexpected that it took the entire Russian fleet by surprise, made by the Japanese torpedo-boats on that memorable night in February, will not be out of place here. Few people even in Japan knew of the departure, on February 6th, from Sasebo, of Admiral Togo and his squadron; and what little intelligence came into Port Arthur up to the eleventh hour concerning Japanese naval preparation was untrustworthy, being principally to the effect that a disposal of cruisers and smaller ships had been made at the chief ports of Japan for defensive purposes. It was also believed that the transports which had started to cross from Japan to Corea with troops and stores, news of which Viceroy Alexeieff received at a late hour, were strongly convoyed, and that, if war came, the Japanese would have their hands too full in perfecting defensive measures to assume the offensive on the sea. There was not a Russian officer in the service who thought for a moment of the possibilities of the Japanese engaging in a

similar exploit to that which won for them such glory at Weihaiwei in the course of the Chino-Japanese War, by sending their torpedo-boats to the attack of the Russian ships in the night through a raging sea. Admiral Stark, who was in command of the fleet at Port Arthur, underrated the cleverness of his enemy from the moment he gave the order which resulted in the ships of his command being anchored in an unmined roadstead near the harbour entrance, exposed to attack at the first opportunity offered by fortuitous circumstances. Every detail of the waterway was marked down on the maps in the possession of the Japanese Naval Staff, and for days, as each Russian ship took up a new position, its location was made known to the officials at Tokio by the swarms of Japanese spies on the watch inside the fortress. Admiral Togo, when he left Sasebo, had an exact knowledge of the whereabouts of the Russian fleet, and when, late in the afternoon of February 8th, he sent forward in advance of the rest of his fleet the flotilla of torpedo-boats, manned by men who were familiar with the minutest detail of the work they had to do, it must have been with a calm assurance of success.

The commander of each of the Japanese torpedo-boats despatched on the dangerous mission spoke the Russian language like a native, and was well acquainted with the coast of the Liautishan Promontory. The night, as I have already mentioned, was dark and stormy, and snow fell in slanting showers. To distinguish objects far ahead from the wet and slippery decks of a cruiser under these conditions was an almost impossible thing to do, and even with the aid of a powerful searchlight it was difficult to identify the shape of a ship. Twelve miles south from Lutin Rock, which is within rifle-shot range of the Golden Hill forts, the fast cruiser *Askold* was patrolling on guard duty. To the watch on her bridge the advancing Japanese boats appeared dim patches in the blurred beams of the searchlight, elusive of near approach and yet moving at ordinary speed through the water. In reply to a hail made with the aid of the megaphone, the Russian-speaking officer on the leading Japanese boat answered that they were Russian torpedo-boats returning to harbour. The ruse was successful: at that time Russian men-of-war were familiar objects in the Gulf of Petchihli, and during that day a

number of Russian destroyers and torpedo-boats had been scouting at sea. With this knowledge in mind, the officers of the *Askold* were not stirred to make a close scrutiny of incoming vessels whose commanders spoke faultlessly their own language when hailed in the night.

Festivities on shore were responsible for the absence from their ships of the Russian officers who were, as in ordinary times, off duty. Approaching in line as near to the anchored battleships and cruisers as they could without fear of detection by the searchlights, the Japanese fired their torpedoes, and immediately afterwards turned in a wide circle seawards. The boat assigned the task of torpedoing the *Sevastopol* failed to hit the battleship in a vital part, but succeeded in slightly damaging one of the water-tight compartments. The *Tsarevitch* was damaged in her steering apparatus, and the *Retvisan* sustained a blow beneath the water-line which made a hole thirty feet long in her side and wrecked the pumping gear. The protected cruiser *Pallada* was hit amidship, near the engines. This crushing assault, coming as it did at midnight in the nerve-stretching tumult of a wild storm, struck at the morale of the Russian

sailors as nothing else could have done. It worked upon their superstitious beliefs and filled their hearts with fear of the unknown. Officers returned hurriedly on board their ships from the pleasures of Port Arthur to find confusion rampant. Lights flashed madly, and a wild fire was directed out to sea from ships and forts, but there was no sight of an enemy. Dawn found the Russian crews at their posts with white faces and trembling lips, and the Japanese fleet advancing to battle. By that night surprise Admiral Togo had done more to ensure the ultimate destruction of the Russian fleet than if he had sunk two battleships in conflict in the clear light of day.

Soon after one o'clock the next afternoon, the steamer, chartered by the Japanese official of whom I have spoken, was returning to Chifu with Japanese refugees from Port Arthur and Dalny, it having remained at the Russian commercial port during the night. Eighteen miles off Port Arthur, near Encounter Rock, the Japanese fleet was sighted steaming south in majestic line. It approached nearer and nearer, and when it returned the salute of the steamer's Japanese flag, the refugees shouted

"Banzai, Nippon Banzai," with hearts stirred to patriotic fire by that splendid spectacle. There was not a man on board the steamer who would not have sacrificed his life in return for one chance to fight for a few short hours on the sea under the battle-flag of his country. The same spirit animated them as that which inspired the men who manned the fireships which were sent to block the entrance of Port Arthur harbour a few days later, on February 25th; and who, saved from death by a miracle, upon reaching Chifu three days afterwards in an open boat and hearing of the failure of their daring attempt, shaved their heads in token of disgrace and sat alone for long days in grief and self-abasement.

CHAPTER II

RUNNING THE BLOCKADE

When once the Japanese had practically secured the isolation of Port Arthur, there were commenced attempts by all sorts and conditions of men to run the blockade. From the numerous ports on the coasts of the Gulf of Petchihli the distance to the besieged fortress was in no case long, and soon no day or night passed by without a steamer or a Chinese junk leaving one place or another with stores and messages for the garrison. From the time of the first Japanese attack until the end of the succeeding May, it was comparatively easy to run a vessel into the harbour of Port Arthur, as although the Japanese fleet was on vigilant watch in the vicinity, it was the policy of Admiral Togo to keep the main part of it—the battleships and cruisers—concealed from sight with the object of puzzling the Russian naval authorities as to its whereabouts. Only a

few torpedo-boat destroyers watched the shores of the Liautishan Promontory and maintained a patrol of the gulf. Many ships were required to convoy transports with troops from Japan, and this necessitated a reduction in the number of vessels Togo had at his disposal for blockading purposes. It was known that the Russian squadron inside the harbour was watching for an opportunity to escape from its prison in the forlorn hope of outmatching its opponent in a sea fight. The Vladivostock cruisers were making bold and daring raids on unprotected merchantmen within sight of the very shores of Japan; and therefore, ships running the blockade often reached their destination without having sighted the black funnels which later on appeared as if by magic in the tracks of most ships traversing the Yellow Sea. The principal dangers, in fact, to be feared at that time were mines and sudden panics in the Port Arthur forts at the approach of strange craft.

But generally, skippers acquainted by many years of seamanship with the coast found it a lucrative and mildly exciting occupation to pilot a steamer through the famous entrance to the harbour of the fortress during a dark day, or,

better still, when the sea was too rough to admit of a torpedo-boat, or destroyer leaving its shelter. The price paid for the risk taken was large, half of it being put down before the voyage commenced and the remainder being paid over upon the landing of the cargo. Thus, for a time, Port Arthur received a steady supply of necessities from two sides—on the land by the railway, and on the sea by steamer and junk. The noise of trains rolling into the station near the new town was never silenced night nor day; signals repeatedly passed between the shore and incoming ships laden with cargoes; and thousands of tons of stores were poured into the place in the few short months which intervened between the first blow of the war and the seizure of the railway to the north by the Japanese.

But when the railway was cut and General Nogi had elaborated his plans for the reduction of the forts from the land side, the difficulties and dangers of blockade running became more and more intensified, and the percentage of captured ships increased each month. The fleet to which was assigned the duty of maintaining the blockade was strengthened, and it exercised

the closest supervision over the movements of all vessels from Shanghai to Tientsin. But with the increase of danger there came a corresponding increase of rewards for risks braved, and instead of being deterred from engaging in the enterprise, shipowners and their captains plunged deeper and deeper into it. The gambling fever held them in its clutch, and some of them staked and lost all in the game, while other men with better luck made fortunes. Commercial adventurers in the populous treaty ports of China, in Hongkong, Singapore, and Manila secretly organised companies to carry on the traffic, and Russian assistance was naturally forthcoming for them from official and unofficial sources.

Soon the Japanese had possession of most of the coast-line in the war area, and when, in July, they entered Newchwang, at the north of the Gulf of Liautung, the command of the Yellow Sea had passed into their hands. Still there was no diminution in the number of blockade runners, and ships flying the flags of various nationalities were numbered in the prize captures.

The most successful coups were brought off by ships under the command of Norwegians and

Germans, who were interested to the extent of about seventy-five per cent. in the illegal trade. One German merchant of my acquaintance realised a profit of £10,000 in three months on contraband cargoes carried to Port Arthur by a steamer of one hundred and eighty tons burthen. The port of departure on each occasion was Tsintau ; the skipper being a Dane, and the crew, strange to say, composed of every nationality except his own. One Norwegian captain I know took supplies across from the same port to Port Arthur and up to Vladivostock four times in as many months, and later on in the year successfully evaded Admiral Kamimura's squadron on three separate runs to the far northern port. One of his modes of operation to avoid capture was to entirely change the colour of his vessel after leaving port. Starting with black sides and a red funnel, the ship would reach her destination with a totally changed appearance. Upon one of his visits to Vladivostock he was greeted by a cheering crowd on the jetty, chief of whom was Admiral Alexeieff, who presented him personally with a cheque for six thousand roubles.

Some exciting stories are told of the narrow

escapes of blockade runners. One of them relates to an English ship which ran a valuable cargo into Port Arthur at the end of the first five months of the siege. Leaving a port on the China mainland at ten o'clock one moonless night, she was within ten miles of the Liautishan Promontory at six on the following morning. It had been an uneventful run, not a sign having been seen of a Japanese vessel. The captain hoisted his signals and shaped his course for the harbour mouth. It was a beautiful morning, with a gentle dawn breeze and a sky of cloudless blue. Suddenly, from away in the distance to the south-east, emerged two tiny clouds of smoke, which rapidly increased in size.

"Japanese destroyers!" exclaimed the captain, an Englishman who had taken a part in disturbances and wars in China for the previous thirty years, to his mate, who was standing on the bridge beside him. After the first eager scrutiny, however, little attention was paid to the strange craft. The steamer and its cargo would soon be safe in port, and the pursuing destroyers would never dare to get within gunshot range of the forts. Hardly had these

pleasing thoughts passed across the minds of the two men, when the engines ceased working, and the ship, which was making about nine knots, lost its momentum, and soon came to a dead stop.

This was alarming ; a backward glance at the destroyers showed them plain and distinct on the water, darting along with tremendous speed. The perturbed captain dashed pell-mell down the steps of the engine-room, and discovered that something had gone wrong with the machinery, and that the first engineer, not a brilliant man at his work, was so unmanned by fear as to be practically useless. Objurgations of the strongest kind were of no avail to inspire him with intelligent energy, and so the captain, with the assistance of the second engineer, set to on the work of repair, and after four or five awful moments of suspense had the engines once more in motion. Hurrying on deck the captain espied the Japanese destroyers three miles away. Seeing the vessel stop they had made sure of their prey, but when she started again they opened fire at her, meanwhile continuing to rapidly diminish the intervening distance.

It is not a nice thing to be on board an

unarmed, defenceless merchant vessel which is being potted at by two venomous torpedo-boat destroyers. Brave man as was the captain, he experienced a sickening fear under that ordeal, which lasted several minutes—minutes seemingly like hours. Part of the top of one of the masts was carried away by a shot, but beyond that injury the ship was unharmed. Once she had reached the protection of the forts she was safe, but it was a long time before she left the harbour on her return voyage.

By a strange irony of fate the French owners of ships running the blockade suffered most adverse luck. One Frenchman whom I know lost three steamers, all comparatively new, and of great speed, in as many months. One had formerly been an Austrian gunboat, and after successfully running the blockade and discharging a cargo in Port Arthur, she was captured near Pigeon Bay, while endeavouring to make for Tientsin, by the Japanese, and taken to Sasebo, where so many vessels have been adjudged lawful prizes.

Strange life-histories could some of the white men on the China coast narrate. Ready to embark in any enterprise, however desperate and

illegal, if there is plenty of money in it—from gun-running in defiance of their Governments, looting wholesale in advance of a punitive expedition, to risking life and fortune in conveying stores to blockaded ports—they form a lawless crowd, who obey no laws but those of their own impulses. They are to be found in every clime, but the free and easy conditions of life in the Far East are peculiarly suited for their natural development. This class supplied numerous recruits for the crews of blockade runners, and that they were not all of unmixed value to the men who engaged them is shown by the following instance. Last November in Hongkong an American captain shipped a crew on a British vessel with a cargo of contraband for Port Arthur. The utmost secrecy was observed as to the destination of the steamer, her papers being made out for Newchwang. She left quietly by night, and after a stormy passage of a little over a week passed to the south of the Miautau Islands in the gathering dusk of a rainy day. A few more hours and she would be at anchor under the protection of the Russian guns. But from a cove of one of the islands issued three Japanese

destroyers and a steam-launch armed with one quickfirer, and the steamer was in less than ten minutes a Japanese prize. On the way to Sasebo the captain of the captured merchantman heard from a garrulous member of the crew that his chief mate, taken on in Hongkong, but with whom he had been friendly for years, had boasted to some of the crew that the capture of the ship was due to him. Taxed with the story, the man confessed that he had given information to the Japanese in Hongkong of the day the ship would sail, of her destination, and of the route she would take. If he thought that he would be rewarded for his treachery it was a case of the biter being bit, for he never received a penny from the Japanese.

In no way behind the foreigner to profit from the needs of the besieged fortress was the Chinaman. The number of junks that traded between Port Arthur and the Chinese mainland, between the first day of the isolation of the fortress to the morning of its capitulation, would, if known, astonish by its size those people who believed in the efficacy of the Japanese blockade. The natural cunning and ingenuity of John found full scope for exercise in the

risky work of blockade running. To prevent certain of his store-laden junks from falling into the hands of the Japanese was impossible, although, on account of their smallness, it was very difficult to locate them after dark. But where junks were of inestimable value to the Russians was in their utility for taking messages and messengers away from the fortress. Every week of the siege brought two or more junks to Chifu carrying passengers, and cypher despatches for the Russian Government. When the Japanese, annoyed at the egress of news, stationed patrols of junks in every part of the Gulf of Petchihli, with orders for the crews to search every sailing craft that passed, the wily Chinese before leaving Port Arthur placed the Russian despatches in tin cases, which were affixed to the bottom of the junks on the outside. In this novel way came through the various communications from General Stoessel to the Czar. The Japanese again and again threatened to sink all junks seen near the Liautishan Promontory, and in one or two cases, where when signalled to do so native boats refused to stop, the threat was carried into effect; but even this summary punishment

did not deter the Chinese from repeating their performances. The extensive seizures the Japanese made of their junks at last aroused their ire, and for a time, encouraged in such attitude by the Russians and their friends, they posed before the world as long-suffering martyrs, who, because, forsooth, they were endeavouring to turn an honest dollar, suffered ruin at the hands of the Japanese. They were, however, filled with sorrow when Port Arthur fell, for with its fall went all their chances of obtaining famine prices for inferior goods, and high fees in return for services which, at any rate, the Russians in Port Arthur could not find any one else to do for them, except when they sacrificed an occasional torpedo-boat destroyer. like the *Raztaropny*, probably the most expensive messenger ever employed for a like object.

The escape of the *Raztaropny* through the lines of the Japanese fleet was one of the most dramatic incidents of the siege of Port Arthur. The Japanese attacks in the early part of November had been repelled ; but the devoted garrison knew that unless relief came, surrender to the enemy or death from disease and starvation surely faced them. Food and ammunition

there were in plenty, but there was an acute insufficiency of medical supplies; and as the area devastated by the bursting shells, thrown with remarkable accuracy from the guns mounted in the Japanese assault works, slowly grew in size, it became impossible to provide for the sick and wounded adequate hospital accommodation. Little was known by General Stoessel of the events that had occurred in Manchuria, or of the vacillation displayed by the Admiralty at St. Petersburg over the despatch of the Baltic Fleet; but he believed that assistance was on its way by both land and sea. Therefore it was his duty to communicate at once with the Czar, stating what, in his opinion, was the length of time in which Port Arthur could continue to offer effective resistance to the Japanese.

For ten days no news of any description had come from or entered the fortress. The naval vigilance of the Japanese was redoubled, a number of junks which attempted the passage across the Gulf having been captured. The weather was rough and cold, and gales were frequent. One black night, when heavy seas were running and snow falling in flurried haste,

the *Raztaropny*, with six bags of mail on board, stole out of the harbour of Port Arthur and headed for the open sea. She was thrown up and down like a cork on the troubled waters, and her crew could see not a hand's length before them. The noise of the storm was deafening, and the waves swept again and again over the deck of the destroyer. Twice did the watch discern the lights of Japanese men-of-war close at hand, and once the *Raztaropny* passed so near to a rolling, plunging cruiser, that there was temporary danger of a collision. The furious elements and the intense darkness favoured the flight of the fugitive, and in the morning she arrived in Chifu harbour little the worse for her venturesome voyage. In the evening she was blown up by order of her commander, Captain Plen, who was afterwards taken prisoner by the Japanese when on his way to Vladivostock on board a British steamer; and when the next day three Japanese torpedo-boats entered the harbour in pursuit of the runaway, they saw only the top of her mast sticking above the water.

A month before the Japanese occupied Newchwang there sailed up the river, on the right

bank of which the town stands, early one morning, a native junk with a Russian officer on board. He had left Port Arthur a week before, and twice his craft was searched by Japanese sailors from cruisers patrolling the Gulf of Liautung. On each occasion he escaped detection by hiding under a pile of fishing-nets in the bottom of the junk, his Chinese friends keeping a discreet silence while the searches were being made, in return for a large sum of money. But many people who essayed the short passage from the fortress to the Chinese mainland were never heard of again after their departure—floating mines, storms, swift destruction from the guns of Japanese cruisers upon refusal of the summons to stand by, and frequent treachery on the part of Chinese junkmen being responsible for their disappearance. The majority of the refugees, however, reached their haven in safety, including one man, a Norwegian, who arrived at Weihaiwei after a perilous journey of three days in a small row-boat, a heavy storm having carried him far out of his course on the way. The last refugees to leave Port Arthur before the fall were taken to Chifu and the German port of Tsintau in the few

surviving remnants, destroyers and steam-launches, of the once powerful and magnificent squadron which, built by Russia to secure her naval predominance in the Far East, so soon came to such an inglorious and tragic end.

CHAPTER III

LIFE IN BESIEGED PORT ARTHUR

LIFE in Port Arthur before the war was marked by a dull level of uniformity common to foreign settlements in the Far East. The naval and military elements comprised the overwhelming majority of the population; for the rest there were business people of almost every nationality, and a large number of Chinese in Russian employment. At one time the only accommodation for the civilian was to be found in what afterwards came to be known as the old town, a straggling collection of native-built. stone houses grouped in the plain and on the low heights immediately surrounding the harbour, and divided by narrow and ill-kept streets. In these unsavoury tenements white men perforce lived and transacted business. Hotels and restaurants, with high-sounding names and the scantiest of equipments for customers, were

patronised for meals by the unmarried men in offices, the officers, the chansonettes, and the visitors who came to see the fortress, these last seeing litttle more as a rule than the passing scenes of a few streets and the consumption of unlimited beer, tea, and vodka *à la Russe*. The best-known restaurant was Saratoff's, a long, low-ceilinged building divided off into four or five dining-rooms, with a large billiard-room at the back. This restaurant was always thronged during the day and far into the night by all classes of residents, its central position on the bund and the excellent quality of its *ménage* bringing it lasting popularity. If you wished to see a friend without calling at his place of business you dropped in at Saratoff's, and there you would meet him. It was a club and business exchange both in one, and many were the meetings of men from the four corners of the world that took place there. The crowd of the bund, soldiers and sailors of all ranks, pretty chansonettes from far-off Moscow and St. Petersburg, the Chinaman, the Cossack driving his droshky and urging on his rough little ponies with wild shout and crackling whip, passed by from morn till night, and from the

windows of the restaurant of Saratoff, the big, bearded, good-humoured Russian, was to be obtained the best view of the endless procession.

There were numerous shops owned by Japanese in the side-streets of Port Arthur, and they all did a large trade until the very eve of war; spoke the language of the Muscovite to perfection, but never forgot their native land, and looked forward with secret confidence to the day when the banner of the rising sun would once more float from the flagstaff of the citadel. The Chinese, as they live it from California to Peking, lived their own peculiar life, saving money if they were rich and spending it all on rice and opium if they were poor; cheerfully working for the pittance which is the despair of the social economist.

The ordinary amusements of social life in Port Arthur were varied now and again by official receptions, circus and theatrical performances, and by the appearances of new companies of chansonettes from Europe. Military exigencies rendered the pursuit of outdoor sport unprofitable, lawn-tennis being the only pastime that could be enjoyed in the open without limitations, due to the environment, being imposed

on the players. Driving and riding in the same circumscribed area month after month is monotonous to the most enthusiastic sportsman, to say the least of it. Penned up within the radius of a few miles of hard rock and barren plain, it is not surprising that the atmosphere of Port Arthur lacked inspiration for men who sought sane enjoyments.

With the slow growth of the commercial section of the population it became necessary to provide improved facilities for business, and a new town was nearing its completion when the war commenced. June of last year was the month appointed for the conversion of the old town into a purely military quarter, and all the business firms had been allotted their new premises, some of the Russian merchants having opened them to business in the early part of 1904. Handsome structures many of the new buildings were architecturally, especially the public and governmental offices. The streets dividing them were wide and well-kept, admirable sites had been chosen for open squares and a park, and there was abundant promise that when finished the new town would be worthy of the importance of its situation. By

an irony of fate the new *café chantant*, erected at great cost in the midst of the foreign residential quarter, was opened to the public on the very night the Japanese made their surprise attack. The new quarters of the officials were laid out and fitted up on a methodical plan quite different from the former confused arrangement whereby the head of one department lived in an obscure native house in some nameless street at one end of the old town, and another one lived over a shop on the bund. Viceroy Alexeieff, as befitted his exalted position, resided in a large and roomy house approached from the street through an enclosed courtyard, at the gate of which stood night and day two Cossack sentries. The officers and men of the garrison lived in their own quarters, in the shadow of the lines of mighty fortifications which girdled the mountains and looked down upon the queer, architectural hotch-potch round which centred so many interests. Strange that such a jumble of dirty Chinese habitations in mean streets, of houses finished and incompleted, of primitive jetties communicating with harbour works planned by the cleverest engineers of Europe, of a thousand and one incongruities,

should be the magnet of such potent attraction.

It was in the bund, not far from Saratoff's restaurant, and near the bridge which leads to the road, sweeping round under a wall of cliff past the railway and the broken land overlooking the harbour, and used for vehicular traffic to and from the new town, that one of the first shells fired by the Japanese during the naval bombardment on the morning of February 9th fell, tearing a huge hole in the ground and sending people scuttling into the nearest houses and up back alleyways. Throughout that bombardment shells fell in many parts of the town and on the sides of the bare, desolate mountains around, but the damage done to property and human life was slight, though the bombardment caused a perceptible increase of the demoralisation initiated by the attack of the previous night. The Chinese, like driven sheep, rushed to the tops of the hills and mountains, yelling with fright whenever a screaming missile passed near them, and most of the foreign residents remained wisely indoors, trusting to providence to shield them from harm. The comparative indifference to the dangers of being under fire, born of familiarity, of future

days did not then exist, and there was much ruffled equanimity amongst the foreigners. That same day, those inhabitants desiring to leave Port Arthur took passages to ports on the Chinese mainland by outgoing merchant vessels. The small number who took advantage of the last opportunity to leave in comfort thus afforded indicated the general confidence felt by the population in the defensive powers of the fortress.

Thereafter a veil of mystery closed down on Port Arthur, pierced by the meagre items of intelligence frequently smuggled out by refugees and Chinese junkmen, and by brief, official despatches, treating only of the military situation, to the Czar from General Stoessel. It was my good fortune to meet many Russian officers and merchants who left Port Arthur during the siege, and from their accounts to obtain a knowledge, transmitted to London in cabled despatches, of what was passing in the besieged fortress up to the end of November, when I left China for England. A general picture of the daily aspect of the streets during the closing scenes, drawn from the descriptions of eye-witnesses, may be of interest:—

The time is early autumn. Shot and shell have been busy at the work of destruction for many long and weary months. Winter has given place to spring, spring has retired before the advance of summer, and for each day of added heat and sunshine the besieged people in this walled hell of torment have paid the penalties of increased hardship and discomfort. In the barrack square on the side of the sinuous hill to the east a military band is playing a stirring march. The sentries on the bund look upwards, and shuffle their feet in easy motion with the musical rhythm, exchanging scraps of conversation with each other. Their clothes and boots are torn and patched in many places, they look thin and fatigued from want of sleep and proper food, their eyelids blink in the bright sunlight, and they stoop at the shoulders like tired tramps. An officer dashes by on a galloping horse, the sentries spring to attention and salute, and then relax into their former positions. A shopkeeper strolls to the open door of his establishment, the windows of which are closely shuttered and barred, leans against the doorpost and smokes a cigarette. A fellow tradesman in the next

house spies him, comes out, and the two men talk together, looking with quick, furtive glances in every direction. From the docks and yards come sounds of labour and the hum of human voices. Men move to and fro on the decks of the motionless ships, men stagger up planks with heavy burdens on their backs, men hammer at great plates being prepared to cover up gaping holes made in the ironclads by Japanese shell and torpedo, men pull big guns into position with awful sweat and toil, men curse the men who made the war.

The string of Chinamen carrying bags of flour down that steep, uneven street is cut in half by the middle Chinaman falling sideways to the earth. A Russian guard steps up to him, looks keenly at his face, feels his pulse. and then shouts an order to the driver of a cart rumbling by on the other side of the street. The driver alights from his seat, crosses over to the guard, seizes the body of the Chinaman. and pitches it into the cart with a mighty swing. The doctors are busy with the wounded soldiers in hospital, and no attention can be given a dying Chinaman which will allow him to cheat death even by the fraction of a moment.

There is a bustle of commotion on board the torpedo-boat destroyers lined up in row in a corner of the harbour nearest the sea. Thick smoke pours out of the rakish black funnels, escaping steam shrieks with syren note, smooth, shining torpedoes are slammed home in the lean tubes, the coal-grimed faces of men mass together in unbroken row, the destroyers slide from their moorings two by two, gather fresh speed each succeeding second, steam round the corner, through the entrance, and into the sea.

Schup, and a shell buries itself in the earth, throwing up piles of cobbles, that fly with venomous force against the walls of the houses, and clouds of dust and dirt. Another shell, with a hideous shout of vengeful hate, tears off the roof of a large square building, the last one remaining of a former row of nine, leaving only toppling walls standing, and hurls itself into a sandy mound twenty yards away. The shopkeepers separate and bolt inside their houses like scared rabbits into a warren, shutting and locking the doors behind them, and seeking the safety of the cellars; the tired sentries run to their bombproof shelter with a rattle of arms; the driver whips up his horse, and the cart turns

the curbstone with a sharp crunch of the near wheel, the bare legs of the now dead Chinaman dangling over the side. The Chinese scatter with yells of fright, the music of the band stops, and in its place is heard the insistent note of the bugle. It is the signal that the daily respite from attack is over, and soon there is not a human being to be seen in the streets. But from the mouths of the guns in the forts rush flame and smoke, and the messengers of death and destruction.

It is midnight, and the moon casts her pale light over the watchful, sleepless fortress. The sounds of the day are hushed, but everywhere there is the whisper of throbbing life. No lights shine from the windows of the few houses that stand uninjured in the midst of ruin, but ever and anon the landscape comes within the radius of the beams of the searchlights on the forts. The shattered walls, the upturned mounds of earth and stone, the motionless but alert sentries, the name on the signboard over the door of the solitary shop in the street, protected by a sheer wall of cliff, the thin dog slinking by, nose downwards, scenting for food and whining with

hunger, the docks, the ships, all are scrutinised in turn and withhold no secrets. Landward and seaward the light traverses, outdazzling the illuminant of nature. It passes on from fort to fort, and then moves swiftly out across the fretful sea ; then stops, its rays focussed on a line of ships stretching from east to west. Back it journeys, and circles round to the north. Far beyond the farthest Russian entrenchment, dotted with the black figures of men and guns, is the encampment of a mighty host. Last night its presence was hardly visible, the night before it was not there at all, and now it is seen with distinctness by the hard-pressed garrison, even its moving life. The great, bare rocks and hills and desolate ravines are monsters of shadeland, hiding mysteries of life and death, but there is no mystery in the revealed presence of that encampment. East, west, north, and south lies the ring of men and ships, which is to narrow each day until the friends on land and sea meet at last on captured soil. The eyes of the fortress are closed, as if in weariness at the sight, and the unchallenged splendour of the moonlight falls on land and sea.

A Red Cross nurse is standing at the window of one of the hospitals, peering through the crack in the shutter out into the night. In her home, thousands of miles away, northwards across the black rivers and the wind-swept steppes, she has seen many beautiful nights like this one, but they were blessed with friends and happiness. Will she ever return to that home, she wonders, and doubt creeps into her mind as she thinks of the hopelessness of those who, like herself, are penned in that relentless ring of iron and steel. A groan of anguish scatters her rambling thoughts, and she turns and walks hastily to the bed on which lies a soldier suffering from awful wounds sustained in one of the trenches that day. The nurse places her cool hand on his fevered brow, and gives him water to drink; but he is too weak to take it, and she moistens his lips. He looks at her with an expression of gratitude in his fast-glazing eyes, a smile gathers on his face, and then the features stiffen in death. He is the third man under the care of the nurse to die in five minutes, and before another dawn many more of his comrades in life follow him across the border to the unknown country. And hope, which

was once so strong and jubilant, has no whisper now for the survivors.

Secret intelligence was brought over from Port Arthur by a Russian gentleman named Eugene de Nojin in the *Raztaropny*, the Russian destroyer that escaped through the blockading lines of the Japanese fleet in November, entered Chifu harbour, and was blown up by order of her commander, Captain Plen. I was in Chifu at that time, and became acquainted with Nojin, who commenced writing a history of his experiences. He had left Port Arthur with the connivance of some of the generals and the naval authorities, but his departure was kept a secret from General Stoessel. Circumstances prevented me from acquiring the details of his history, as he was compelled to leave China to avoid the unwelcome notice of the Russian officials at the Chinese treaty ports, to whom General Stoessel communicated at the earliest opportunity the nature of the information possessed by the fugitive ; but I gleaned enough knowledge to upset all my previous belief in the dominating personality of General Stoessel in the stubborn defence of the fortress.

M. Nojin said, and he had attested documents to prove the truth of his statements, that early in the siege the military resources of Port Arthur were in such an undeveloped state that the Japanese would have had little difficulty in taking the fortress if they had pressed home their attacks without delay. To strengthen the defence works at Nanshan the main forts of the principal positions to the south were practically left without defenders. The sense of relief experienced by the besieged inhabitants when the Japanese did not at once press forward was only exceeded by their profound astonishment over the folly, as they termed it, of the enemy in missing such an opportunity of capturing the fortress.

The freedom of criticism to which this exposure of Port Arthur to the risk of immediate capture gave rise bred disputes and quarrels, which became intensified as time went on, and which were only prevented from growing into open discord by the efforts of some of the stronger personalities in the dissatisfied council of defence. A determined opposition to General Stoessel arose, the heads of the fleet lending their support to General Kondrachenko and

General Smyrnoff, two men whose skill and judgment were largely responsible for the plan of defence which so long kept the Japanese at bay. General Stoessel, confronted by a virtual cabal, was forced to bend to the will of the majority and became only the nominal head of the garrison. As a civil administrator he was uniformly successful, and his arrangements for the protection of the non-belligerent residents were made with much skill. But to think that he was the spirit of the defence the world believed him to be, judging him from the reports sent to the Czar with his signature, was, said M. Nojin, to arrive at an erroneous conclusion. While being confident that Port Arthur was in a position to hold out for six months longer, my informant stated that the hospital accommodation was not sufficient to deal with one-half the number of cases requiring attention in the early part of November, while medicines and lint were nearly exhausted, there being no chance to obtain fresh supplies. The physical strength of the men had reached a low point, and there was ever present with them the fear of an outbreak of plague consequent on the bad sanitation and the stench from decaying corpses

lying unburied outside the forts. Provisions and ammunition were there in abundance, and there was a determination to fight to the death.

Since the end of August there had sprung into existence a feeling of comradeship between the Russian soldiers and sailors in Port Arthur, in marked contrast to the unfriendliness that had existed from the time of the first Japanese bombardment. This change of feeling was attributed to the personality of Admiral Viren, who took over the command of the fleet from Prince Uchtomsky, after the disastrous naval sortie of the early part of August. When captain of the *Bayan*, the future admiral had the reputation of being the cleverest naval officer of his rank in the Russian Navy, and his appointment to the highest post open to promotion, though it came too late to be of valuable service to the ships under his command, was one dictated by a recognition of his unequalled fitness for the position. It was due to the brain of Admiral Viren that the Russian fleet was not destroyed by the Japanese long before the month of December. His disposition of the battleships and cruisers in the cramped space available was skilful in the extreme, and

he gauged to a nicety the possible fire zone of the Japanese before the capture of 203-Metre Hill. The movements of ships in the harbour being always followed by the discharge of shot and shell from the unseen enemy, Admiral Viren one day stationed a cruiser for a short time in a certain part of the harbour, and when she was moved the position she had occupied was marked by buoys. Within an hour twenty shells had fallen inside the lines of buoys, either one of which, if it had struck her, would have sent the cruiser to the bottom. How the Japanese obtained information of the exact position of the ship was never known, but as at that time they were not in possession of any height from which they could command the harbour with artillery, it was suspected that secret intelligence was being conveyed to them from inside the fortress.

When the Japanese, by dint of assault after assault, delivered at incredible sacrifice, had taken 203-Metre Hill, the end of the siege had virtually arrived, and the inevitable capitulation was hastened by the death from an exploding shell of the brilliant genius and noble hero General Kondrachenko, on December 18th.

The Russian garrison had resisted the Japanese advance with wonderful heroism, and not until further resistance was rendered useless by the destruction of every chance General Kuropatkin ever had of effecting its relief, and by the laggard advance of the fleet, which was to have raised the blockade last autumn, was the fortress surrendered to the besieging army. With that surrender was closed a chapter of history teeming with incidents which for dramatic interest have never been surpassed in the military annals of mankind.

CHAPTER IV

IN SEARCH OF NEWS

The first shot fired in the Russo-Japanese War was the signal for the introduction of a censorship of press messages in Russia and Japan far more rigorous than it was after the relations between the governments of the two countries became of a strained nature. It had long been impossible to cable news from Port Arthur, and enterprising correspondents there were in the habit of sending their despatches by hand to the Chinese mainland to be wired to Europe or America. By the end of February there were no ships leaving Port Arthur, and thereafter little satisfactory news could be obtained of what events were happening over the water. It was known that Japan had landed thousands of troops at Chemulpho in Corea, and that she was setting in motion the plan of campaign on land thought out and prepared in every detail

long before by the cleverest brains in Tokio, and that important movements of Russian troops in Manchuria were in progress: but the real facts of the situation were hidden from sight, and for the first time in the history of this generation the leading newspapers of Europe and America were unable to secure more than the scantiest details, and these often incorrect, of a great and epoch-making war. Special correspondents were waiting in every treaty port of China and in Japan for the necessary official permits to accompany the troops, and they were compelled to wait on in patience until the eve of the big land fighting, and dissect the myriads of rumours that came to them in the hope of finding reliable news.

Towards the middle of February I was ordered by the *Daily Mail*, for which journal I was acting as war-correspondent, to charter a despatch-boat and use it, as my judgment dictated best, for the acquisition of news. After much trouble I was able to secure the steamer *Chefoo*, of one hundred and seventy tons burthen, with a speed up to ten knots. In spite of her small size she was a comfortable ship, and during the month she was under my control proved in

every way satisfactory. The first trip I made in the *Chefoo* was to Chemulpho, where the Japanese troops were landing day and night from big transports and proceeding by train to Seoul, the capital of the country, and marching on from there to Pingyang, not far from the Yalu River. In ordinary times one day spent in Chemulpho would satisfy the sightseer, but as the port for the disembarkation of a huge army it contained many attractions. Japanese flags fluttered over every doorway in the native streets, and Japanese men, women, and children appeared to predominate in number over the silent, white-clothed natives. There were many regiments of Japanese soldiers marching from the wharves to the railway station, men who were going to meet in battle for the first time people of another race and colour; but there was no excitement, and the men and women going about their daily business did not turn out of their way to look at the processions. In the work of removing the piles of stores from the wharves to the godowns there was visible the same sober earnestness, the same suggestion that here was a hive of human ants. In the foreign club perched on the top

of the hill overlooking the town there was far more emotional demonstration over a good stroke at billiards than the ants showed when they saw the Russian ships blown up and sent to the bottom of the harbour after the fight with the fleet commanded by Admiral Uriu.

The transports ceased to come to Chemulpho, and there arrived a day when the sapient foreigner in the local customs service told me that Japan had already exhausted her resources. The alarm he expected to see depicted on my face not being forthcoming, he commenced a series of arguments upon the mission of the white race, and I left him to convert his moon-faced Corean servant to his views. Down on the jetty were numerous bales, a few coolies gazing out to sea, while others, armed with long, yellow bamboo poles, conveyed away the bales, and two or three Japanese sentries. This picture was not calculated to encourage one sent out to look for live news, and when a seedy countryman of mine came up and offered me his services as a black-and-white artist, I resolved to return to China. On the way over the little *Chefoo* ran into a storm, and was stopped by a Japanese cruiser, the officer who

came on board to examine my papers upsetting the susceptibilities of the skipper by refusing to have a drink. Beyond hearing stale news and scores of full-blooded rumours I had heard or seen nothing at Chemulpho warranting the expenditure of a thousand pounds on a despatch-boat. It had been an enjoyable cruise for the captain and crew, but it lacked spice to a man on the look-out for naval battles and torpedoed transports.

Early in the morning of March 3rd the *Chefoo* was slowly grinding her way through the pack ice in the Tatung Inlet, the wide channel of water leading from the sea to the port of Chinnampho. It only required a storm to break up the white field, and we were to have that on the way back. Soon after noon the *Chefoo*, with paint scratched from her sides by the ice, anchored in mid-harbour, close to two Japanese cruisers and three torpedo-boats. The hills near the town were dotted with natives, who were quite unable to account for the presence of a foreign merchant steamer at that time of year in the harbour. On shore I was informed that the *Chefoo* was the first neutral ship in port that year. From the activity in progress

and the number of Japanese and military officers stationed in the town, I saw it was clear that Chinnampho was to be used as a landing-place for the troops. Buildings for storage purposes and accommodation were being prepared, and two small transports near the wharf were busy unloading supplies. The horrible state of the roads was responsible for my skipper, when he went ashore, losing his shoes: they were taken charge of by the mud, and he was too anxious to return on board his ship to retrieve them.

The only two foreigners I found in Chinnampho were the Commissioner of Customs and the manager of the American gold mines near Pingyang, who could talk of nothing else but the shortage of silver and the consequent danger of losing his native labour. Agents had secured all the available silver in every part of the country for the payment of the Japanese troops. The Commissioner had lived nearly all his life in Corea, and was an interesting conversationalist. I stayed at his house until late in the evening, and then returned to the *Chefoo*. During the night the ice, drifting down on the current, broke one of our anchor

chains, and crunched against the sides of the ship in an alarming manner.

The wind in the morning was blowing furiously, and when I asked the captain what time he could start back to Chifu, he replied that it would be impossible to leave that day. Eventually, upon my representation, he started the ship on her return journey in the afternoon. By that time there was a north-western gale blowing, and before we had gone far the broken floes of ice were being dashed with dangerous force against the sides of our ship. The noise was terrific, and the water flooded our deck and found its way into the cabins. To go forward and reach open water was the only safe thing to do, and it would take several hours to steam clear of the ice. The Chinese cook, always an alarmist, —who, when his ship was lying in the harbour of Port Arthur during the bombardment of February 9th, and splinters of shells were falling into the water, jumped overboard and swam ashore—now opened his mouth and gave vent to his fears in loud and blood-curdling yells. A frying-pan seized from his hand by the irate second officer, and used as an instrument of punishment, effectively quelled his fears, but as a

result the cooking suffered in quality for a day. A broken, jagged piece of ice was hurled on to the bridge by a great wave, wounding the native quartermaster in the head so badly that he was unable to continue his duties. When a Chinaman is temporarily knocked out it is by an injury that would kill the average white man, and the second officer, overcome as he said afterwards by the sight of the blood of the disabled man, went below and consoled himself with a bottle of brandy. The hour came round for him to replace the captain on the bridge, but the profundity of his slumber, as he lay in his bunk clasping tight to his breast an empty bottle, necessitated the captain taking extra duty and, incidentally, securing a new officer at Chifu.

At 10 o'clock the *Chefoo* was in ice-free water, and late next morning she lay at anchor in Chifu harbour, and we were busy taking stock of the damages done to her. The cook-house had gone, a boat had disappeared, the glass and crockery wares in the ship were in smashed fragments, and a hundred and one odd little things which form part of the equipment of a vessel were ruined beyond redemption.

It did not take so long to effect the necessary repairs as I had at first anticipated, and one night, a few days later, I took a run in the *Chefoo* over to the Liautishan Promontory. By dawn the following morning we were near Port Arthur, and approached to within a distance of the land which enabled me to distinguish the details of the fortress, the houses in the old town, the barracks, the forts, and, what was of special interest, the sunken Japanese fireships to the right of the entrance. No notice was taken of our approach, and although we remained there for ten minutes, not a signal fluttered in response to our own, and we did not see a sign of life except the smoke from the fleet hidden from our view in the harbour. That same evening a British steamer arrived at Chifu from Port Arthur, manned by a small crew of Norwegians, and owing to their mysterious reluctance to say anything of the conditions of the fortress, messages stating that Port Arthur had been deserted were sent to the native papers, and from them copied into the foreign press of Shanghai and Tokio, the irresponsible authors very thoughtfully fathering the responsibility for the origin

of the statement upon the correspondent of the *Chefoo.*

On my second journey to Chinnampho I met with a rather curious experience. Five miles up the Tatung Inlet the *Chefoo* was signalled to by an old Japanese gunboat.—"Where are you going to?" said the coloured flags.—"To Chinnampho," fluttered the answer.—"Why do you want to go to Chinnampho?" was the next query. It was rather a poser, too, and I scented an utimate request to return whence we had come. My skipper, excitable and not blessed with an over-supply of judiciousness, roared out the nature of our business through a megaphone. A strong wind was blowing, and the second officer, the new one taken on at Chifu, was holding down the dancing pages of the signal book. The ominous answer to the information supplied by the skipper was this: "We know who you are, and we advise you to turn back." I took the megaphone and asked why that advice was given to us. The two ships were drifting very near each other, and I could see the people on board the gunboat with admirable distinctness. Four officers were clustered on the bridge puzzling out signals, and the

men were crowding to the side intently observing us. Some also I noticed, with an uncomfortable feeling at the knee-joints, were standing round the guns. "Mines," came the signal. I assured them that I would take the risks of being blown up by mines, and for several minutes the officers on the bridge seemed to be discussing the advisability of letting me rush onward to my fate. Then, "You can proceed," the signals told me, or rather told the skipper, for I had my doubts about the correctness of his reading. Thereupon the *Chefoo* went ahead, and the gunboat sheered off and watched us. Then she started signalling again; signal succeeded signal with such rapidity that we were unable to follow them. When I asked him if he was sure that the former signal was "You can proceed," the skipper was indignant, and asked me if I thought he could not read signals. So we continued on our way, but not for long, because the gunboat, with a speed I should not have given her credit for making, swung round in a big half-circle which brought her right across our bows. Then, "You must return," "You must not go any further," were megaphoned orders that the skipper could not misapprehend. But he had no good word for

the Japanese after that incident, which for some peculiar reason or other he seemed to think reflected upon his ability to read signals. Steaming down the coast to Chemulpho during the night after our abortive voyage we passed transport after transport on the way to Chinnampho from Japan. The procession of ships convoyed by Japanese cruisers seemed an endless one. Thousands of armed men were passing by in silence in the black night, and giving no sign of the pulsant life that was to win the crowns of many victories.

In Chemulpho I was informed that the diplomatic mission despatched to Corea by the Japanese Government, in charge of Marquis Ito, had arrived there the previous day, and had gone on to Seoul that morning. The success of that mission was accomplished in the face of difficulties which can only be understood by those who followed day by day the course of events in the Corean capital. The catastrophes Russia had met with on the sea had not yet gone far to destroy the influence of M. Pavloff, the clever and unscrupulous Russian Minister who had exploited the group of financiers from St. Petersburg interested in timber and mining

concessions in the country. He had gone, having been banished by the Japanese ; but his agents remained behind him, and there was little love lost between the Corean and the Japanese. The one represented the worst forms of conservatism, and the other the most enlightened progress of the Far East.

The titled and wealthy classes in Corea as a general body much preferred the gold of Russia to the reforms of Japan, and they intrigued against the Japanese more from motives of self-interest than from any feeling of patriotism. To overcome this hostility towards them took the Japanese a considerable time ; that it was prevented from long retarding the cause of Japan was due to the statecraft of Marquis Ito, whose policy pursued during a critical time will, if the signs of the time point aright, result in the establishment of a form of government by Japan in Corea similar to that exercised by England in Egypt.

Several arrests of suspected Russian agents were made while I was in Seoul and Chemulpho, and the day I left the latter port there escaped on board the American cruiser *Cincinnati* to Chifu a former general in the Corean Army

who was in the secret service of Viceroy Alexeieff.

Little by little Japanese influence became paramount in Corea, and a marked change was soon noticeable in the relations between the Japanese and the natives. The people in the country districts, who had fled to the hills when the troops from across the water first landed on their shores, returned to their farms and cottages, and despite the disturbing events that occurred for some months in the neighbourhood of the Yalu River, Corea did not suffer to any appreciable extent from an interruption of its normal tranquillity; nor during the course of the visits paid to Corea in the despatch-boat I had chartered did I see a sign of anything else than goodwill existing between the Japanese and the working-classes of the country.

The attraction of Port Arthur took me one morning in the *Chefoo* to a part of the Gulf of Petchihli from where I could gaze upon the battlemented heights which guarded so many secrets. It was a regal spring day, with blue, unclouded sky and waveless sea. The water stretched clear and unruffled right away to where the cliffs on either side seemed to meet. Behind

that seemingly blank wall of rock the Russian fleet was lying at anchor, and its admiral was planning with anxious thought how to escape from the trap in which he was held. Such an idea was mine when I looked up and saw two spiral columns of smoke detach from each other and widen out. They increased in size, and presently I made out two Russian destroyers coming along at full speed. It was not long before they were plainly visible, their bows sending up the water in white sheets. Men in dirty white trousers, stripped to the waist, and officers in uniform stood on the decks. Bang, bang! and the *Chefoo's* engineers received the order from a shouting captain to stop the ship. The smiling, grimy faces of stokers were thrust through openings in the decks of the destroyers for a second or two, and then disappeared below again as one of the destroyers, with a hiss of escaping steam that grew into a deafening shriek, stopped alongside the *Chefoo*. The commander of the vessel was at first inclined to take us with him into Port Arthur, but changed his mind after he had read our papers, pulled the pigtails of the Chinese crew to see if they came off, and thus discover that we had Japanese on board in

disguise, and searched the holds for contraband. After an interesting chat he left, and the destroyers scurried back to Port Arthur.

In April I left the *Chefoo* and journeyed to Newchwang, where there were congregated over twenty newspaper correspondents. The Russian officials, civil and military, made things pleasant for us in a social direction, but had no news to disseminate that was worth the cost of cabling. The land fighting had commenced, but we only heard of it through the telegraphed despatches from London which were placed each morning in the club. Troops came and went and guns passed to and from the fort at the mouth of the River Liao without cessation, going in by day and leaving by night. Every afternoon the garrison of the town was reviewed in the square in front of the civil administration buildings, the band played, and an old general with a flowing white beard and rows of medals across his breast, mounted on a splendid black charger, exhorted the men. They cheered, performed a final march round the square, and went back to barracks. Grand Dukes of Russia, and notables of France and Spain attached to the Russian forces in Manchuria, came down for a change

from the monotonies of life at Liaoyang every week, and in Newchwang at that time there were varied gaieties. General Kuropatkin held a review of ten thousand Siberian troops one day, and as he was landing from the launch which had brought him from the station on the other side of the river two disguised Japanese stepped out of the crowd of spectators and advanced towards him, but were seized before they could fire the revolvers found loaded upon them. We correspondents took photographs of the scenery, of the troops, of ourselves, bearded the civil administrator in his den in the morning in the vain hope of being of service to our papers, took Russian lessons in the afternoon, or postponed taking them and rode our ponies instead, and played bowls and billiards in the evening.

One day the Russian residents all left in a bunch. The Japanese had sent four ships to bombard a Russian position near Kaiping from the sea, eighteen miles away from Newchwang, and the noise of the firing created a panic which resulted in this premature evacuation. The fugitives all came back the next morning, and remained until the last days of July in possession of the town. That very morning one correspondent set off to

Kaiping in a Chinese cart, and was stopped five miles outside Newchwang by a body of Russian troops in retreat from Kaiping. He mournfully said to us that it would not have mattered if his captors had only been Japanese.

The successive defeats met with by the Russians exercised a disquieting effect on the native mind, and the bandits in the neighbourhood grew ever bolder as the attention of the Russian troops was more and more diverted to the Japanese advance. Every night villages were attacked and robbed by the marauders, who at last commenced to make petty depredations in the native city of Newchwang. The residents in the foreign settlement became seriously alarmed at the prospect of what would in all probability happen when the Russian evacuation occurred and there ensued an interregnum before the arrival of a Japanese garrison. A committee was formed under the chairmanship of the American Consul-General to arrange for the defence of foreign life and property in case of necessity, and the sloop *Espiegle* was ordered to Chingwantao by the British Government, to be in readiness to steam to Newchwang whenever requested to do so by

the British Consul at the port. Each week the Russian troops in the neighbourhood were reduced in number, and with the reduction there was a corresponding increase of robberies and outrages amongst the Chinese in the city. The native constables delegated by the Chinese guilds to maintain order could not be relied on at critical moments, and, at the urgent request of the foreigners, most of whom were of his own nationality, the British Consul sent for the *Espiegle*. The Russian gunboat *Sivoutch* was anchored off the bund, but she was in a partially dismantled state. The *Espiegle* arrived one day late in the afternoon, and remained at the mouth of the River Liao, close to the forts. She was boarded by Russian officers, who communicated the fact of her arrival to the Civil Administrator, and there was soon a pretty furore. The Administrator insisted upon the immediate withdrawal of the *Espiegle*, and after communications had passed between Sir Ernest Satow at Peking and the British Consul his demand was acceded to, the *Espiegle* leaving in the early morning. Shortly after her departure the *Sivoutch* steamed at full speed down the river, returning at noon, and the story, industriously

circulated amongst the Chinese, that she had driven off the English man-of-war, met with ready acceptance. The *Sivoutch* not long afterwards was scuttled and deserted by her crew near Sanchaho, a village on the east bank of the Liao, thirty miles from Liaoyang. In the meantime there was no rising of Chinese in the foreign settlement of Newchwang, although the town was only protected by a nominal garrison, but there was no change in the panicky condition of the inhabitants.

For several weeks, after dusk, unless the moon was visible, we moved about in Cimmerian darkness, no lights being allowed to be shown on land or river. The stern challenge of the sentry met the nocturnal pedestrian at every corner, and it was necessary to be quick with the password. If you had forgotten it or had never heard it, you generally made long speeches of a friendly description to the challenging sentry you could not see in the darkness, and then pushed on, in fear and trembling, until you were brought to a sharp standstill by the sentry at the next corner. The dogs of the town, too, caused trepidation to the nervous by their hungry hostility. You could not go two yards

without meeting an objectionable dog. I was told that before the Russian troops had thinned down the number of them there were more dogs than Chinese in Manchuria; from my personal observations I should think that at the present time there the dogs outnumber the Chinese three to one.

Weeks passed by and the ranks of the correspondents dwindled one by one. Some went home, some went back to Japan, despairing of the arrival of expected transports and the landing of Japanese troops, and some left for Moukden. By the end of May there were only five or six of us remaining to fill the breach.

CHAPTER V

A TRAGIC EXPERIENCE

From point to point the Russian troops were forced northwards from the neighbourhood of Port Arthur, until, unable to present an effective front to the Japanese, they became split up into divisions, which, in country selected for its natural advantages, attempted to check the advance from east to west of the Liautung Peninsula of the irresistible enemy. In the latter end of May and the first week in June the Japanese were posted in strong force along the coast north of Port Arthur, and some lively fighting was daily occurring in the mountains and ravines which are the chief physiographical features of the peninsula. Curt, official despatches dealt with the situation, but the descriptive pens of the correspondents attached to either army were stilled by military regulation, and of the exact nature of the Russian or

Japanese positions the world knew practically nothing.

In Newchwang we waited day after day in tantalising knowledge that not many miles distant the best fighting-men of two nations, representing the East and the West, were engaged night and day in fierce and savage warfare. Chinese refugees poured into the settlement in a ceaseless stream, carrying their goods and chattels, and they told strange stories of the desperate bloodshed which attended the meeting of the two foes, of men exhausting their last cartridges and continuing the struggle with rocks and stones hurled at each other, of grim encounters in narrow valleys with thrusting bayonets and swinging rifles, lasting for hours, and only ended by surging floods of water from the surrounding heights, set in resistless motion by torrential rainfalls. To attempt to witness something of this kind of warfare was the bounden duty of men licensed by their newspapers to go where they willed to secure news.

Living with me at that time in Newchwang was Mr. Lewis Etzel, the special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, an American, with a resourceful nature built up and strengthened

by a life of travel and adventure in all parts of the world, which eminently fitted him for the position with which he was entrusted. Tall, broad-shouldered, of immense strength, he was expert in all physical exercises, was a splendid horseman, and was gifted with a ready adaptability of nature to all circumstances. He and I arrived at the conclusion that any step was preferable to our life of idle repose in the hope of some stirring event occurring in our immediate neighbourhood, and we at last determined to charter a Chinese junk and sail down the Gulf of Liautung to some neutral port, endeavouring to see an actual engagement on the way. If we followed the coast-line, all the chances were that fortune would favour the object of our projected exploit. We were introduced to and interviewed an old Chinaman, who had large interests in the native shipping trade of Newchwang, and eventually he agreed to charter one of his junks to us for two weeks. The junk, a boat built of thick wood to carry cargo, was thirty feet long, with a seven-foot beam. There was a small compartment for the native crew in the stern, and five holds forward, each four feet deep, and just wide enough to

accommodate a man of average size with comfort, the deck at the sides being a foot wide. A mast in the bows twenty feet high carried a large fore-and-aft canvas sail. We had to supply our own provisions, rugs, and other necessary comforts for the voyage, and it took us two days to prepare our outfits.

On Sunday, June 5th, with our two mafoos, or native grooms, and an interpreter, we left Newchwang by the early morning train, and arrived at Shuantaitse, our destination, in an hour and a half. Shuantaitse is thirty miles north of Newchwang, situated on the banks of a small tidal river fifteen miles from the sea. It stands a mile away from the railway station of the same name, and we had ordered the junk to be sent there to meet us on account of its privacy and seclusion, the Cossacks, the only foreigners who ever went there, having left, not to return, the previous week. It is a small town, with most of the houses built on either side of a street half a mile in length and of decent width, down which are driven every hour of the day herds of cattle brought in from the country and sent as far north as Harbin and Vladivostock.

The day was a lovely one, and Etzel and I were in high spirits, which were shared by our servants, who, unaware of our actual plans, believed we were bent on a shooting trip. Having engaged a number of coolies to carry our baggage, we walked to the native inn by the side of the river, and were speedily the objects of the village curiosity, one officious Chinaman, who appeared to be the local magnate, asking us a number of pertinent questions relating to our private affairs. The owner of the junk informed us that we must either wait for the junk to come up with the tide, or go to meet her in sampans. We decided to wait until the afternoon, and having had lunch, went out to inspect the big, iron railway bridge which crosses the river, and watch the cattle being ferried across to the other side on rafts. No junk made its appearance, and at two o'clock we engaged three sampans to take us towards the mouth of the river. It was slow and weary work twisting and turning with the muddy stream through dreary flats and verdureless gorges. Twice the boatmen carried us ashore through the thick mud of the shallowing banks on their backs, and from the summits of little hillocks

we looked for the sails of our junk. But we saw no sign of a sail, and, darkness coming on apace, we had perforce to return to Shuantaitse. We found the inn filled with soldiers, coolies, and beggars, all sleeping close together in every room, and in the midst of this company, dirty and evil-smelling, we took what rest we could, while fleas and mosquitoes competed for the largest drops of our blood.

With the sunrise we were off again, this time in a small junk, and late in the afternoon came to the estuary of the river, where we found the junk we were in search of at anchor, unfavourable winds having detained her for twenty-four hours at Newchwang. Quickly our things were hurried on board, and at half-past five o'clock our course was set for the open sea. A stiffish breeze blew and we made good speed, the white sail of the junk with its enormous stretch of canvas straining and creaking at the spars and cordage. In our wake the ruffled water foamed in frothy wavelets. Blue haze veiled the fantastically-shaped hills of Manchuria, sailing boats far and near shone like burnished silver in the clear sunlight, and flocks of birds whirred overhead in swift flight to the bounteous plains

of North China. The novelty of our position and the knowledge that our plans had started with success thrilled us with delight, and we drank to a happy ending to our enterprise. We sat down near the tiller and smoked and talked, watching the crew squat round a gigantic pot of steaming hot rice with wooden bowls and chopsticks in their hands, and shovel away at the food in animal contentment until the pot was empty and only the bowls remained to be licked clean of odd grains. Later we fitted up our holds for the requirements of the voyage—Etzel being in the one next to mine, the two being separated by a thick, wooden partition. Before attending to this work we noticed four junks ahead of us, but their appearance did not call for more than a passing glance.

I had placed my things in order and was making a memorandum in my diary when I heard a sudden commotion among the Chinese crew, shouts, and a rush of feet along the narrow deck. Then my mafoo, with a scared look on his face, looked down over the side of the hold and said, "Master, Chunchuse man wanchee makee fight." At the same moment I heard

the sail come down with a lumbering rush, and then the song of the bullet sounded in the air. I sprang to my feet, seized a rifle that was standing against the side of the hold, and slipped home a cartridge, for I knew that if pirates had attacked us it meant a fight for life. Ping, ping, ping ! zlip, zlip, zlip ! whimpered the bullets as they passed overhead and struck the junk on every side. The sound of Etzel's angry voice came to my ears, " What for you pull down sail ? Up with the sail."—" Yes, pull it up," I shouted, but no notice was taken of the order ; a sudden silence reigned, only broken by the whistling and drumming of the bullets. My mafoo, lying prone on his stomach across the holds, looked down at me again. He twisted and dodged, muttering spitefully, " Dam fool, dam fool ! " an expressive phrase he had picked up from foreign masters during seven years of his wandering life, as bullets struck and chipped the wood near his clutching fingers. Then he disappeared from sight again.

" Etzel," I cried, " Etzel," but there was no answer. Again the mafoo's face appeared over the hold. " Master," he whispered, " other master makee die. I was stupefied for a moment,

and then I clambered up the side of the hold and looked down across the partition. There, stretched on his back, with an arm moving feebly backwards and forwards in front of his face, one of his legs curved sharply at the knee-joint, and his head in a horrible pool of blood, lay my poor friend. I jumped into the hold and knelt down by his side. "Etzel, old man, what's the matter?" were the words that involuntarily rushed to my lips. His closed eyes did not open; he breathed stertorously, and his body moved with convulsive jerks. I unfastened his coat collar, seized a handkerchief, and placed it at the back of his head, from where the blood gushed out in a thick stream. I moistened his lips with brandy and tried to pour some of it down his throat; but his clenched teeth would not be opened and the liquid ran down his throat, making a white channel through the red patch. Then, with one last shudder of the limbs and a little, gasping sigh, he was still, and try as I would I could not get him to give another sign of life. I washed the blood-stained face, and straightened the fast stiffening limbs, afterwards covering them with blankets. Above,

the silence had given place to a clamour of voices and the stamping of feet.

I went on deck and found that our junk was not moving, the sail being down and the crew huddled together in excited conversation in the stern. Four large Chinese junks surrounded us, and on each junk was a crowd of Chinamen with villainous faces, and all armed with rifles. The junk on the port side sailed towards us, and as she drew nearer the men on board pointed their rifles at me, and shrieked and cackled, their hideous, yellow faces distending with savage glee. It was fine sport to hold up a foreign devil! The Chinese on my junk motioned the strangers to go back. The interpreter came to me and said, "They are Chinese soldiers, and when they saw you come out of the hold they stopped firing. But if they know that they have killed a foreigner they will murder all of us." I realised the truth of this statement. Twelve miles from the shore, with the night fast descending upon us, and with no one to witness what occurred, these men would shoot us and scuttle the junk if they knew what had happened without the slightest compunction or hesitation, to escape punishment.

The Chinaman at the helm had been badly wounded in the back by a shot, and was lying on a blanket in the stern. The strange boat was soon alongside. The soldiers were dressed in black cloth uniforms with brass buttons. Belts of cartridges were slung round their shoulders, and swords and pistols were stuck in their waist-belts.

"Has a foreigner been wounded?" asked the officer in charge, noticing the excitement of my crew.

"No, only a Chinaman," came the answer from the interpreter. The answer did not satisfy the officer, for some reason or other, and he said that he would come on board and see for himself. The only thing to do was to stop him from doing this; but how to do it? Suddenly I thought of a Chinese passport obtained before the commencement of the war from the British Consul in Shanghai, which was stowed away in my writing-case in the hold. To secure it was but the work of a moment, and I gave it to the interpreter, telling him to explain who I was, the nature of my business, and to state that I should make a serious complaint to the Chinese authorities if

the officer persisted in his determination to come on board. The vigorous remarks of the interpreter, coupled with the sight of the big red and black lettering of the passport, succeeded in dissuading the Chinaman from his purpose. He said he was sorry his men had fired, but they mistook the junk for one owned by a gang of pirates they were looking for, and for whom they would continue the search. His boat slewed round, and went off to join the company of the other three. Our sail was rehoisted, and we were soon once more alone on the open sea. That passport had saved our lives.

The wounded Chinaman's back, I discovered, had been ploughed across by a bullet in the fleshy part below the shoulders, and I bound up his injuries. He drank the greater part of a bottle of brandy in three gulps, smiled affably, and went to sleep.

The junk-owner wanted to return at once to Newchwang, the wind being favourable for the journey; but I knew that notices had been long promulgated by the Russians warning foreigners and natives that all shipping approaching the river during the night would be sunk by the fire of the guns in the fort. The nearest

place then to go to would be Erchiakia, a small town of mud and stone houses on the coast, twenty miles from Tienchuantai, at which village was the nearest railway station on the line to Newchwang. This place we made for, having to use the big, clumsily flattened yuloh to propel the junk through the water the greater part of the way, the wind having dropped at dusk. We came to Erchiakia close on midnight and landed on a mud flat, into which we sunk to the tops of our boots. I covered up the hold which contained the body of poor, slaughtered Etzel with boards, and instructed the crew to remain on the junk until we returned in the morning, and on no account to say a word of what had happened to any one who might come on board. There is a Chinese military camp at Erchiakia, and I went there for a guide, with me being the two mafoos and the interpreter. The native sergeant wished us to stay there during the night, and was evidently puzzled at my desire to be off on my journey at such an unearthly hour. He asked me if we had seen anything of four junks with soldiers aboard on the voyage, sent out that afternoon to look for pirates, and when I told him we had he became effusive,

and again entreated me to partake of his hospitality. But I refused, and having secured the services of a guide, carrying a large paper lantern, started on my way. It was a long and lonely walk across mud flats, along mere tracks for paths through the fields, and over rotten boards which, pressed down by our weight, squelched in the refuse and stagnant cesspools of villages given up to filth, dogs, and darkness. The mafoos lagged behind me and the interpreter; but the guide moved ahead like a dancing will-o'-the-wisp, the light from his lantern throwing grotesque shadows across the fields. Dawn was breaking when we reached Tienchuantai, footsore and weary; but I had to wait until the station officials came from their beds before I could wire to Newchwang. The first train up brought friends and horses, and in the afternoon the body of Etzel was back at Newchwang.

Three days later, in an ancient, tree-shaded graveyard, sweet and fresh with the flowers and foliage of early summer, we left Lewis Etzel to his rest. His friends, people of all nationalities even the Chinese who had known him, stood round the grave, and as the minister

spoke of him whose life was cut off in its prime in so tragic a manner there were many wet eyes in the mixed company.

At the official inquiry which was held into the circumstances of the murder, the defence set up by the Chinese was that we on our junk had fired first, and a bullet was shown in support of the allegation. But it was a clean bullet, taken from a cartridge identical with those used in the Lee-Metford rifles of the soldiers, while the two rifles on our junk were of a different make. It is perhaps needless to say that no shot was fired from our junk. The officer in charge of the four junks and a corporal were sentenced to imprisonment for a number of years, the general in command of the district was degraded, and the Chinese Government paid the mother and sister of the victim of the outrage £5,000 as compensation.

CHAPTER VI

GLIMPSES OF AN ARTILLERY DUEL

THE Russian bank manager let fall the burning end of a cigarette from his fingers, thrust his hands into the pockets of his grey cloth trousers, and stared out over the Manchurian plain at the hills showing faintly through the mist dissolved in the heat of the first beams of the July sun. Then he turned on his heels and came over to where I was sitting on the wooden seat which ran round the edge of the stone tower we had selected as the best site in the neighbourhood from which to see the expected artillery duel. There was a look of ill-concealed excitement on his face, indicating that his mind was occupied by other thoughts than of the scenery he pointed out to me and commented on. I listened to him and looked in the direction of his outstretched hand. The house-tops of the foreign settlement we had left

behind us that morning were glistening softly in the morning light, and thin threads of smoke from newly-lit fires ascended into the air. The masts of the shipping in the river were spires guiding the flight of birds on the search for food; against the yellow stonework near the British Consulate, glimpsed through the gaps in the green foliage of a clump of trees, the poles of the scaffolding stood out blackly, and moving dots of brown which began to sprinkle the yellow were Chinese workmen. Grass plains, villages, and rolling hills made up the rest of the landscape. Anon dogs yelped, men went forth to their labours with noisy cries, cart-wheels creaked over the rough roads, the flag of Russia unfolded to the breeze from the top of the administration buildings in the foreign settlement, the mists dispersed, and the duel began with puffs of smoke from chasmed paths in the hills east of Tashihchia.

The month of June was not yet two days old when, in compliance with the order of the Czar, General Kuropatkin sent General Baron Stackelberg south from Tashihchia in command of a strong force of infantry, artillery, and cavalry to endeavour to break through the Japanese

lines and relieve Port Arthur. General Stoessel had been driven back from Nanshan, and the complete encirclement of the great fortress had commenced. The forces at the disposal of the Japanese commanders, to the surprise of the ill-informed General Kuropatkin, allowed them to continue the pressure southward undisturbed by the Russian relief movement, and on June 13th General Oku, with an army of about eighty thousand men, moved north from Pulantien, and, after forced marches, met Stackelberg at Telissu two day later and gained a decisive victory over him, the result of the engagement being to clear the Russians from the northern part of the peninsula. Continuing his march to the north to join the army of General Kuroki, which was capturing the principal passes through the mountains to Liaoyang, the victor of Telissu next met and overcame the Russian forces under General Count Keller at Kaiping; and then, without delay, pushed on along the Kaiping road in the direction of Tashihchia, driving the retreating Russians before him. With such rapidity did he advance that on the night of July 23rd he was within range of the first line

of defence works thrown up by the enemy in front of Tashihchia.

His victorious march had been the signal for General Kuropatkin to hurry down from Liaoyang and himself superintend the final arrangements made for the battle, the result of which was to decide finally the fate of the plan of campaign which had for its objective the relief of Port Arthur. From Haicheng came fifteen thousand troops and ten batteries of guns to swell the power and number of the army centred under the command of General Zarubaieff in the hills guarding the Russian railway. Every device of modern defensive warfare had been requisitioned to render Tashihchia impregnable to attack, and before the end of this beautiful Sabbath day, July 24th, there would be a decision of the issue between the two combatants. That decision, declared my Russian friend, would be in favour of his countrymen, and I did not contradict him, because he was a man whose nerves had been wrought upon acutely by the thick cloud of disasters which had fallen upon his country since the outbreak of the war, and it would have been cruel to have dispelled his illusion. The opening puffs of

smoke in the east sent him jumping from his seat to the far end of the tower for purposes of observation.

The puffs were repeated at regular intervals, veiling the rocks with fluffy, white balls of filmiest texture, which threaded open in the breeze and stretched floating lines to the green plain at the foot of the hills. These lines stole along the plain to each other, mingled, and rose upwards slowly in unbroken column until only the blurred outline could be distinguished of an opaque mass which ever grew in size and density. The thunderous music of artillery fell on the ear in chorused peal, calling up echoes from hill cavern and hollowed recess. The Japanese challenge was answered ere yet its voice was stilled by the fire of a line of Russian batteries of immense strength, concealed with admirable skill in the cleft and seamy sides of a lofty hill dominating the rugged country over which the Japanese were making their advance. So fierce was the concentrated fire from these batteries that its horrible, barking roar drowned the thudding note of the Japanese guns stationed on the other side of the valley. Minutes dragged on, but the roar continued—minutes that brought

on to every housetop, wall, and mound in the surrounding country people with craning necks and straining eyes turned to the east. The foreigners in the treaty port whose rest at night had been disturbed for weeks past by the noise of battle advancing ever nearer, the Chinese villagers whose lives had been harassed for years beyond remembrance by wars and rumours of wars, looked on the conflict from afar with hope, fear, and mistrust. On the blue sea not thirty miles away native fishermen let drop the sails of their crude craft and sat idly listening to the din; often had they heard it before, but not until that moment had it signified the armed encounter of East and West. Therefore they smiled and discussed the event between themselves with some show of animation, and postponed hauling in the nets from the sea for an hour or two. The Russian with me on the tower stood, with limbs twitching excitedly, gazing at the smoke with eyes glued to his field-glasses.

The gradual clearing of the cloud which had gathered over the Japanese position revealed evidences of an abandoned advance from that direction. The firing was weak and irregular, as if from batteries half put out of action.

Presently even this spasmodic demonstration of artillery practice ceased, and the Russian guns were volleying at an invisible enemy. But fifteen minutes after the Japanese withdrawal there sprang out from behind a sloping knoll of green earth in the angle of the valley the tell-tale ring of white cloud, followed by three more rings from the sheltered sides of other adjacent eminences. What guns were they? Russian or Japanese? The answer came with the spreading out, until it formed a three-quarter circle, of the Russian line of fire with the knolls as the targets of the gunners. On higher ground still than this line a battery which had not yet disclosed its whereabouts joined its voice to the discord, and thirty minutes later the Japanese were silent on the east, only the guns behind the knolls continuing to fire with monotonous regularity. The heat made the head ache, and objects at a distance danced in the blue flicker. Cold lunch and bottled beer appealed to me for the moment more than the battle, and I sat down on the form with my back against the hot stone parapet, calling over the Russian to join me. He came, glad and exultant, and his conversation, punctuated by

thuds of artillery, came to my ears as a jubilant strain of Russian victory. Kiuliencheng, Wafango, Telissu, were lost because of refusal by commanders to place in the field a force of equal strength to the foe; but this mistake had not been repeated by General Kuropatkin at Tashihchia, and now the Japanese were to have a whipping; they had, indeed, already received a whipping, but they would not get far before they were cut to pieces by innumerable Cossacks. The change of fortune, as with England in the war against the Boers, had at last come for Russia. Official sanction for his joy appeared to be conferred by the news of a Cossack orderly, whom he hailed, riding by to the foreign settlement with despatches declared to contain news of a Japanese defeat. There was not enough beer in which to celebrate the occasion.

Far off to the north-east a fresh rumble of artillery broke the stillness. It crept nearer and nearer, as though in stealthiest approach by devious ways, and towards two in the afternoon rings of smoke from points on the crest of the hill slightly east by north of the main Russian position demonstrated that the Japanese had commenced an advance in a different direction

to that of the early morning. The Russian batteries had been all unmasked, and General Oku was going to outflank his enemy. The rings spread to the surrounding ridges and the volume of noise increased each minute. The Russian gunners replied, and detached one of their batteries from the end of the central line and stationed it in the long scoop of a low hill in the foreground, the dark brown colour of which stood out with startling conspicuousness from the green grass of the immediate valley and the dull red rocks heaped together and scattered singly at base of hill and on dried-up watercourse. A terrific cannonade ensued for two hours, and a curtain of smoke obscured the earth, standing like a vast, outspread sheet with frayed edges in the valley, and sending out curling festoons in every direction. From the tower we could see nothing to indicate the progress of the fight, and the Russian strode up and down in impatient vexation. Things were not turning out quite as he had anticipated; the Japanese did not yet consider that Tashihchia was an impregnable stronghold.

By-and-bye a breeze sprang up and drifted the smoke clouds apart. Where before there

was nothing to strike the eye but gaunt hills and broken ridges were now the circling rings of smoke from the mouths of the Japanese guns, which were pouring out shell and shrapnel in one continual stream. Some of the Russian batteries had been silenced, but from the central position a spirited fire was being maintained. Each recurring thirty minutes saw an extension of the Japanese front, and it became evident that the superiority in strength rested with Oku. Throughout the afternoon the terrific duel continued, but from not one inch of ground did the Russian artillery retire. A battery, silent for twenty minutes, and then reopening from all its guns, told of gunners killed to a man at their posts and replaced by reserves. The light faded, and spurts of flame became mingled with the smoke. Darkness came on apace, and the smoke was hidden from sight. The pyrotechnic display reached its climax—from every hill summit and spur of rock flashed out quick signals. Suddenly, from the elevated tableland commanding the Russian centre, from the left and the rear a row of lights blazed out for the space of two seconds. Then darkness settled down again, and then once more blazed the lights. The

Russian fire slackened, stopped; Oku's flanking movement was crowned with success. There was a sudden cessation of firing, and the silence of night reigned over the earth. But out there I knew that the Japanese infantry were descending into the valley like an avalanche from the hills where they had been impatiently waiting for the supreme moment to charge, and would soon be sweeping up the heights guarding Tashihchia and jumping into the Russian trenches, completing with the rifle and the bayonet the victory of the artillery. They did not experience much close fighting: when the Russian commander knew that the day was lost he rapidly withdrew his men, and a defensive retreat commenced to Haicheng, in which much bloody work was done and thousands of lives were lost on either side. The battle of Tashihchia was an artillery duel, won by the Japanese through numerical superiority in guns and men and superior generalship.

Before leaving the tower to return to the foreign settlement, I discovered that my Russian friend had stolen away in the darkness. He left the foreign settlement that same night with the rest of his countrymen, and I have not seen nor heard of him since.

CHAPTER VII

THE JAPANESE AND THE RUSSIAN SOLDIER

It was near the end of an oppressive afternoon in the month of August before the war that I saw the Japanese soldier for the first time on duty. The dusty streets of Tokio with their queer-shaped houses were behind me, and my jinricsha was bowling along a broad, white road edged with the grass of park and common. To the right were the still waters of a moat, backed by a high wall, through the crevices of which straggled flowers and plants of bright and various hues. My jinricsha came to a stop at the foot of a wide flight of massive stone steps, leading up and up, towards which the coolie, doomed by the nature of his calling to run through life at a quicker rate than the vast majority of his fellows, comprehensively waved his hand. I alighted from the vehicle and made my way to the top of the steps,

which led on to a bridge of handsome structure built across the moat. At the far end of the bridge was a huge and ancient arch, in appearance very much like the arch of any old English castle that has not been renovated out of its ancient beauty, and in the gateway stood two sentinels who might have been made to the order of the most exacting autocrat who ever took delight in a chosen regiment. With all the statuesqueness of pose characteristic of the European soldier on guard, there was something in their look and attitude which made me think of the watchful alertness of the tiger just before the fateful spring, the restraint of the greyhound at the voice of his master. Clothed in bright and attractive uniforms, similar in texture and design to those with which we are familiar in the West, provided with the arms used in the armed camps of Europe, and in a picturesque setting reminiscent of parts of England hallowed by history, they appealed to me as types of the perfect fighting man. But, I reflected, they were alien to me and my kind, and, though I admired them and sympathised with them, yet if I lived, talked, cried, and laughed with

them for the rest of my life I should always be a stranger within the gate. Below me was unrolled the map of the capital city of Japan, and hidden from sight behind the stately trees seen through the archway was the royal home of the Mikado, ruler of an Oriental race.

Some months afterwards I saw the Japanese soldier many times. Three weeks before war commenced I made his acquaintance at Shan-haikwan, in North China, where he lived side by side with the troops of England, Russia, Germany, France, and China, the district being then as now under international control. In that centre of military rivalries the Japanese soldier showed a behaviour unsurpassed in excellence by any of his foreign comrades. Good-tempered, kind-hearted, and taking a delight in his work, he was regarded by his critics with great favour. Even the Russians liked him. I witnessed on the eve of war the merriest fraternisation between a party of Russian and Japanese troops—the one section under orders to leave for Port Arthur, and the other to return to Tokio. Knowing that before long they would be flying at the throats of each other, they yet jested and laughed, trying

to understand what each other said, and exchanging cigarettes with careless generosity. The same friendly spirit, in the intervals between the fighting, has caught the attention of observers throughout the war.

That spirit cannot be said to have been lacking in the following instance. When, after the battle of Tashihchia, the Russian garrison evacuated Newchwang by order of General Kuropatkin, the Japanese were not long in taking over command of the place. Two scouts were the first troops to enter the town, and they rode direct to the civil administration buildings, a magnificent pile of architecture erected in the régime of Viceroy Alexeieff. There, in one of the smaller rooms, they came upon a Russian soldier who had managed to get left behind his brothers-in-arms. He slowly rose up from behind some furniture and faced his captors. They smiled amiably at him, and, reassured, he pulled off his cap and commenced to fan himself with it. Now, it is a common custom for the Japanese soldier, in war and peace, to carry about with him in the hot weather a small fan. On this occasion a fan was forthcoming and handed to the Russian. But he

refused to take it, preferring to use the cap. Still with an amiable smile on his face, one of the Japanese, a short man with abnormally broad shoulders, again proffered him the rejected fan with the left hand, at the same time covering him with a revolver. The captive took the gift without further reluctance and fanned himself with vigour. It cooled him far more than the cap.

The chivalry displayed by the Japanese soldier to a fallen foe has been demonstrated on innumerable occasions since the momentous crossing of the Yalu. I have witnessed the considerate treatment accorded to Russian prisoners, treatment which could not be excelled in point of consideration by any army in the world. Several times it was my duty to investigate charges of cruelty and inhuman conduct preferred against the Japanese, and, after collecting all the evidence it was possible for me to do, I in each case came to the conclusion that there was not a tittle of truth in the charge. The Japanese soldier is a gentleman, fierce and bold as a lion in battle, and caring not a jot for his life so long as he is fighting for his country, doubly dangerous on the field

of battle because of his intelligence, his clear knowledge of the value of the stake he is fighting for, his scientific equipment; but when his enemy is wounded and helpless at his feet, even in the fury of conflict, the Japanese soldier gives him the helping hand of brotherhood. At the front, in the home, he is the same, brave and kind, and many of his fine qualities we can all copy with advantage to ourselves.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the Japanese soldier is a man who thinks of nothing else but fighting. He would far rather follow the arts of peace than the art of war, although at the call of duty he relinquishes without a murmur all personal interests, and until the sword is replaced in the scabbard, the rifle restacked in the armoury, he has but one devotion and that is to the flag of his country. His quickness to learn is a national heritage to be found in all classes of the population, as is also his delight in physical exercise. With alert brain and splendid muscle, goaded to accomplish deeds which have thrilled the world by a burning fire of patriotism, armed with the best weapons the ingenuity of man can devise, thorough in efficiency, he possesses a

combination of qualities which confidently challenges all rivalry. That he should do such work on dried fish and rice, with an occasional cigarette as dessert, is the marvel to most of us.

The few needs of the Japanese soldiers have gone far to simplify the arrangements for the war made by his commanders to a point without a parallel in modern times. Into an ordinary Japanese schooner can be put a larger cargo than the casual observer would imagine possible, and an extraordinary use has been made of this type of sailing vessel in the transport of supplies to the front. Two days after the flight of the Russians from Newchwang and their supersedence in the government of the town by the Japanese, there came up the River Liao, with all sails set, six schooners with dried fish and rice for the troops. They had come from Chemulpho, and thereafter, not until the river was frozen over in November did an hour of the day pass without marking the arrival of one or more of these white-winged craft. Enormous quantities of supplies were shipped in this way to the front, leaving the big transports free room for the conveyance of men and ammunition. From Chinnampho to the

southernmost port of Corea schooners and junks were purchased, and sent to swell the fleet of food-carriers to the Japanese army, and the native fishermen of the Yellow Sea found it more profitable to trade with the Japanese commissariat department than with their ordinary customers. The natives of the Miautau Islands, not far from Port Arthur, who are one and all deep-sea fishermen, reaped a golden harvest by sending dried fish to Newchwang for the consumption of the army. The Japanese naval patrol of the Gulfs of Petchihli and Liautung safeguarded the schooners from attack on the sea, and torpedo-boats, picturesquely denominated by the Chinese "thunder-fish," escorted them in safety to the upper reaches of the Liao River.

From Newchwang and Tashihchia the army of General Oku pressed onward along the flat and sandy plains of South Manchuria into mountainous country; Haicheng was taken, and its capture was succeeded by the forward movement to Liaoyang. In the rear of the armed men, along the innumerable waterways which overspread the country like a net in every direction, moved the schooners, their light

draughts being splendidly adapted for the shallow depths of the countless creeks. As the numbers of troops increased, Chinese junks by the hundred were requisitioned for transport services, the Japanese from the first losing none of the immense advantages gained by their sea supremacy. They were quickly enabled to enjoy better those advantages than they otherwise would have done, owing to the fact that the frugal fare of their soldiers permitted them to use on the most extensive scale practicable boats unsuitable for the carriage of food required for an army of white men.

There are many similarities, as also differences, between the Japanese and the Russian soldier. Both are splendid fighters of invincible courage, both are satisfied with pay and food of the smallest and simplest description, and both can endure hardships of the most terrible nature without a sign of suffering. The Russian is a bigger man physically than the Japanese, but slower in his movements, and a stranger to those qualities of dash and supple initiativeness which have marked the attacks of the conquering troops in every engagement of the war. If brute force and stubborn doggedness and a

refusal to acknowledge defeat were the highest qualities a soldier could possess, the Russians would have been victorious in the Manchurian war long ere now; but unfortunately for them their opponents entered the conflict better equipped than they, by both nature and training.

The war started with Russia in a state of total unpreparedness, and with only a few regiments of Siberian troops in Manchuria ready to take the field. I saw much of these men and the men they were going to fight in the early part of 1904, and the contrast was a very striking one. On the one side were readiness, complete efficiency in all departments, patriotic determination, nerved and strengthened by knowledge acquired from the best sources, a definite plan of campaign thought out in every particular, with all contingencies provided against, and an army fighting for the attainment of an object the righteousness of which was believed in by every man, woman, and child in Japan. In contrast to this there was the picture of men drilled to fight when they were told to without knowing what it was they were going to fight for; animated more by fear of, than liking for, their officers; devoid of quick

powers of intelligence, because no mental stimulus was ever given to them to think for themselves ; commanded by men who as a body quite failed to appreciate the situation, and lacked the earnestness which characterised the officers on the other side from lieutenant to field-marshal general ; unsupported by a Government, the members of which were at sixes and sevens with each other ; and without a united nation behind them, owing to the fact that millions of people in Russia never knew there was a war raging during the first months of it, and those who did know of the fact knew next to nothing of the Japanese.

My first acquaintance with the Russian soldier left me with the impression that he was splendid but spoiled, and I have seen nothing in his character since to alter that opinion. If the same spirit animated him as that which fires the Japanese, and a stronger bond of sympathy existed between him and his officer, the war would have shown very different results. But he is at present a slave to a conservatism as fatal to the development of individual qualities as that of the Chinese mandarin. Reared in an atmosphere like that which pervades the

barrack yards of Japan he would be unconquerable in battle.

The religious superstition of the Russian soldier is only equalled in intensity by his love of music. In Newchwang I lived close to the barracks of part of the garrison. The Sabbath services of the men were always conducted with the greatest fervour, the discourses of the venerable priest being followed with unmixed attention, and a spirit of reverence I have never seen surpassed in any place of worship. But the principal part of the service was the music played by the regimental band, the soldiers singing the stirring choruses time after time. The heartiness and devotion displayed by these rough, untutored men often made me think that their Church had solved the problem of how to attract and hold men to its faith and doctrines, until I remembered that no other form of faith had ever appealed to them—that they were children in knowledge, fenced round by a feudal system of government which permits of no revolt against the ways of orthodoxy. That thought, while it destroyed the real value of the impression, led me on to think if the Russian soldier would be a better man without

his religion, and I came to the conclusion that his simple faith alone saved him from a dark and pitiable life.

When on the march, Russian troops keep their spirits high by singing songs of war and of the homeland. In moments of victory and defeat inspiriting choruses are chanted with or without the accompaniments of the bands. When dawn dispersed the darkness of that fatal night in February which signalled the first mortal blow of the Japanese against Russian naval power in the Pacific Ocean, the officers and men of the Russian fleet sang the national anthem of their country, while, with its forest of masts standing black against the horizon, the Japanese squadron moved forward to the attack. That stirring hymn was sung many times afterwards inside the walls of Port Arthur, and on the decks of the ships imprisoned in the harbour, but never again with such fervour as on that day. There was the approaching enemy, ships in line of battle; the forts and their garrisons at the guns; the inhabitants of the town watching from the tops of hills and the roofs of the houses; Viceroy Alexeieff and his staff eagerly on the alert in the signal station

on towering Golden Hill; merchant ships in the roadstead and harbour, of many nationalities, with people on board all curious, waiting; the Chinaman, true son of the East, knowing that the white stranger was at last called upon to fight by men in many ways like unto himself, peering at and noting everything that was taking place around him,—and the appeal to heaven for victory was made in full-throated unison by thousands of fighting men, an appeal that has received its answer.

I heard the Russian national hymn sung under strange conditions by one hundred and fifty Cossacks one bright morning last July. The battle of Tashihchia had been fought and won by the Japanese, the Russian settlement of Newchwang was in flames, most of its inhabitants had left, and swarms of Chinese were looting in the deserted houses, parading the streets, and waving little Japanese flags which had appeared as if by magic from secret hiding-places. Down the sunlit street leading to the north came the Cossacks on their ponies. All of them were strong and muscular, toughened by years of campaigning in the wild regions of the Russian Empire, and perhaps concealing from

speech a latent admiration for the foes with whom they had so lately crossed swords. Many of them had long, bushy beards; they were none of them under thirty years of age. They wore caps and uniforms of grey cloth, and their rifles were slung over their shoulders; overcoats and other articles of kit were neatly secured to the saddles of the ponies. They had been fairly beaten, and knew it; but as they rode away, slowly and reluctantly, with signs of Chinese jubilation at their departure on every hand, they sang the anthem of their nation—not in defiance, but with a manifest sincerity which touched the hearts of many who heard it.

These soldiers, the Cossacks, have in measure lost the fame which at one time fascinated the attention of the world. Centuries ago, when Russia first began to extend the borders of her empire, to the Cossacks fell the work of the pioneer, a work continued until the occupation of Manchuria without a pause. The important part taken in the wars of Russia by the fierce and dare-devil horsemen who reverenced the Czar as a god is of universal knowledge. The very name of Cossack was one which appealed to the popular imagination, and when the arms

of Russia and Japan clashed on land for the first time last year people all looked for the share played by the Cossacks in the encounter. Soon it became apparent that these formidable troops were unable to turn the tide of victory against the Japanese, and now, after months of fighting, their former exploits are forgotten in the disasters which have fallen upon them. The Japanese cavalryman, indifferent horseman as he is, has satisfied all the requirements made upon him, and what he lacked in numerical strength was supplied by the deadly shot and shell, against which the valour of the squadrons of General Mistchenko was of no avail. By the force of the conditions of warfare imposed upon him in Manchuria the Cossack has lost his old reputation.

In defence the Russian soldier is at his best, as the fierce fights at Port Arthur and in Manchuria prove with grim forcefulness. Told to hold a certain position, he will stand there and be battered to death, fighting all the harder as it is made plain to his slow-working brain that death is certain. The elements which go to secure the success of the Japanese soldier may be lacking in him, but no one

can accuse him of being less brave than his enemy.

Rye bread, vegetables, and meat form his staple foods, and he is as fond of a glass of vodka as is the British sailor of his glass of rum. He is not often seen drunk, although that is probably because he has no chance of being anything else than sober, or—and I have seen undeniable proofs of it—that he has a head of iron strength, potent to resist the intoxicating influences of liquor of any brand. He is sociable and merry with his comrades, but hostile to a stranger, whom he regards in much the same light as the English rural labourer regards the "furriner," until he is acquainted with him.

The Russian officer struck me, when I met him, as being an affable, courteous gentleman, who thought far more of the social side of life than he did of his profession. He has certainly no intention of passing through life without enjoying himself to the utmost, and he does not bother his head much in thinking of the morrow. He has none of the friendly intercourse with his men seen between officer and man in a British regiment; but he takes a keen interest in their welfare, and is not such a

martinet as is his German cousin. He speaks French and German, and in the highest grades of the service the English language, although he is not generally the fluent linguist many people suppose him to be. More English is spoken in the Russian Navy than in the Army, the study of that language being compulsory in the Russian naval colleges.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHINESE SOLDIER

A GERMAN Minister in China had been done to death in the streets of Peking by a mob given over to the passions of the jungle beast, and a prince of the Imperial House of China was on the first stage of his long journey of penance for the misdeeds of his countrymen. To receive him on one of the jetties of the river port of Shanghai, which was the last piece of Chinese territory on which he would set foot for many months, stood half a regiment of native soldiers. They wore badly fitting, brass-buttoned jackets of dirty red cloth, black hats with wide, red brims were placed at different angles on their heads, their feet were encased in white-soled, black cloth boots obviously turned out to a certain order of size regardless of the comfort of the individual wearer, and the rifles they carried were of antique make,

testifying by their griminess to the personal habits of their owners. A few of them carried umbrellas made of bamboo, useful alike for protection from rain or from the fierce rays of the sun. A vast, unwashed, noisy multitude of natives pushed and bayed at the heels of the troops, fingering the red jackets and examining the ancient rifles and scabbards of the big swords with an insatiable curiosity which met with no check. The soldiers, for all the heed they took of this intimate scrutiny, might have been wooden images dressed by tailors to delight school children on a holiday. Apathy, indifference, and—it may have been fancy—on some faces shame, were the masks worn by these men standing there in ragged lines to meet their prince. Their dark, almond-shaped eyes stared out across the wide river with the gaze of dull understanding; for them there was no meaning in the ceremony. They stood there like sheep in unquestioning obedience, weighed down by the lethargy of the ignorant fatalist.

At the end of the jetty a band of native musicians played wild, discordant music on the reed instruments of primitive make which have been used in China for four thousand years, and

will doubtless be used there until the end of time. There was no attempt to secure harmony as we understand it in the West; the musician who blew the loudest and made the weirdest noises for the longest period was the leader for the time. Then he would be displaced by a rival who, having during a minute of silence filled his lungs with air, suddenly shrieked out a top note to be heard far and wide above the din. When each musician is a band unto himself the effect produced is uncommon, and the Chinaman has a weakness for uncommon effects in everything from music to torture.

The bizarre element also entered into the decoration of the gaily painted pavilion erected for temporary reception purposes. On the wooden sides were painted in gorgeous colours figures of hideous gods of war, standing astride landscapes dotted with walled cities and pagodas, strewn with the corpses of innumerable victims slain in war. From the flag-staff fluttered the Chinese Royal standard of Imperial yellow crested with the dragon. Inside the pavilion were the officers of the soldiers, smoking opium, gambling, sleeping, disputing with shrill voices and strange gestures, and showing not the least sign of

interest in their men or in their profession. Here was lack of knowledge, criminal incompetency hand-in-hand with vice, a reflex of the causes which have led China to the edge of the abyss which swallows up national existences.

The ship with the prince on board swung round the corner of the river, and slowly came alongside the jetty. The officers tumbled out of the pavilion in shouting disorder, the band played frenziedly, the undisciplined crowd swept to the end of the jetty, and were beaten back by coolies armed with bamboo poles, one old man with a white beard being knocked into the water and left there to drown without an effort being made to save him. The troops came to some sort of attention, each one saluting the prince as he landed, in a different style to that of his neighbour. Portly mandarins kowtowed, many high-flown compliments were exchanged, and, with great difficulty, a way was forced through the struggling multitude to the carriage, into which the prince was hustled with quite Occidental rapidity. Then he was driven away, and the troops followed the royal turn-out at a shambling trot, each carrying his rifle at the dictate of personal inclination.

This picture of the Chinese soldier as I have seen him will be familiar to every foreigner who has lived in China for any length of time. The rotten corruption of the Peking Government—a corruption which is reduplicated in all the official departments of the country, however exalted or humble—has amongst other things reduced the fighting value of the native soldier to such a low level that he is useless even against the bandit. The wage due to him is appropriated by his officer, he is treated as a beast, little comfort enters into his life, for the most pardonable mistake he is made to suffer fearful punishment, he is taught to despise everything and every one foreign, is armed by his chiefs reluctantly enough with foreign weapons, but is rarely instructed how to use them, or keep them in order, and he is regarded as lower in the social scale than any coolie. Yet we know that the Chinese can fight like mastiffs when led by a Gordon, can by proper treatment be turned into fighting machines such as they who formed the Weihaiwei regiment, raised and commanded by officers of the British Army, which was always to the fore in the fierce fighting which attended the Boxer revolt. Converted

from slaves into free men, given responsibility and taught how to use it, paid properly and treated kindly, they fought for us in their own country and against their own kith and kin at a time when the yellow wave threatened to engulf every foreigner in the land.

There is little that a Chinaman cannot do when once his interest is aroused in a given subject. If he can attain the reputation of being the smartest man of business in the world, can carry off the highest honours in intellectual pursuits, there is no reason why he should not be eminent in the military profession. The great obstacle to progress in the Chinese Army, as in other public departments of the country, is the fixed conservatism of the upper classes. When Li Hung Chang introduced the modern rifle into the Chinese Army, and stopped the manufacture of bows and arrows for the defensive purposes of the nation—gave huge orders to European manufacturers for big guns and the latest appliances for the construction of deadly armaments—he believed that by these means China would quickly take her place in the ranks of the first-class Powers. But the great Oriental forgot to learn the

important lesson so thoroughly grasped by Japan, that internal reform is first necessary for the success of any movement whereby a country, weakened by its own corruption, seeks to secure the fear and respect of foreign nations.

The soldier who discarded his obsolete weapons and took in their place the magazine rifle was not instructed how to handle it, for the simple reason that his officer was as ignorant as he himself of its proper use. His rifle, therefore, soon became worthless, rusty, tarnished, and its barrel filled with filth. The guns in the forts were neglected in the same way, and the millions of pounds spent in the hope of making China a strong military power might just as well have been thrown into the Yellow Sea. The same policy has been followed since, and the signs of reform have only just commenced to be discernible.

The year 1900 taught the Chinese soldier his power, but with one or two exceptions, voices crying in a wilderness of ignorance and reactionarism, none of his rulers profited much by the lesson. The number of European instructors, however, in the army was increased

by the addition of several German officers, but the principal help in this direction was requisitioned from Japan, the old contempt for the island kingdom having given place to a feeling of sympathy and respect in certain enlightened and powerful circles in Peking. The Japanese teachers, not being altogether alien to the natives in thought and spirit, wielded far more influence in the ranks of the Chinese Army than did the Europeans, and soon initiated an improvement in the temper of the troops under their instruction. One of the first things the Japanese did was to show the soldier how to keep his rifle clean, an important reform which was soon emulated by the best troops in North China. More attention was paid to drill than formerly, target practice was introduced where before it was unknown, and efforts were made, with, however, little success, to secure the proper payment of the troops. This last reform was, and is, hampered by the squeezing crowd of governors and mandarins occupying positions in the Army for which they have no capability, and who grow fat on the sums rightly belonging to their men. These human blood-suckers form one of the great curses of China, but

the people are powerless to remove them from office.

When the war between Russia and Japan broke out, there were five hundred Japanese instructors in the Chinese Army, according to the best available authority, and since then they have everywhere displaced the Europeans, including the Germans, and it is easy to appreciate the quickening impulse thus given to the zeal with which such men as Viceroy Yuan Shihkai have endeavoured to improve the standard of the Army. That standard could hardly be lower than at present, and perhaps it will never be such as to warrant the assumption that China, by her own power, could resist aggression; but it is permissible to imagine John Chinaman drilled in the mass by the victorious Japanese to such a state of perfection that China could safely refuse to grant more concessions to the outside world.

The Chinaman has powerful physique as a rule, is possessed of undoubted courage, and, under the inspiration of a cause which he has understood and espoused, has often in the past amazed the world by his deeds. With all the qualifications necessary to be turned into an

unrivalled fighting man, he is thrown away directly he is placed under the command of the benighted dunce above him in rank. The different grades of command in the Chinese Army are just as numerous as elsewhere, and generals, commanders, colonels, captains, sergeants, majors, corporals, and the rest of them, have each their peculiar and distinctive marks of honour, from plain stripes to yellow jackets and peacocks' feathers. It may be taken for granted, however, that, as a general rule, the higher in rank the officer is, the higher is he also as a graduate in devotion to the undeviating ways of his ancestors.

The Chinese soldier, like the Japanese, can subsist on very little food. He eats two meals of rice and vegetables each day, a little meat being occasionally given him. He smokes cigarettes of the brands imported into China from America in enormous numbers and sold at a price within his means. He can sleep anywhere without a blanket or board under him, can stand incredible hardships, and possesses wonderful marching powers. His amusements are few and simple; he is indifferent to the claims of sport for recognition, and takes his pleasures quietly

indoors. If he is a skilful player on the guitar he is in great request among his comrades, who will sit round him in a circle for hours at a time listening to the twanging music of the instrument. He is an inveterate gambler, and derives as much excitement from a game of chance with a few cash as does any patron of Monte Carlo playing for thousands of pounds. Theatrical entertainments possess for him considerable attraction, as they do for all Chinese, and whenever a native company of actors appears in the district where he happens to be stationed he is generally to be found in the audience.

When the harvest had been gathered in from the plains round Kwanming, in Manchuria, last year, I attended a performance given by Chinese actors in a large bamboo enclosure roofed with matting. Men, women, and children were there from places many miles distant, and forming part of the mixed assembly were soldiers and swarms of Chunchuses. The performance commenced in the morning and lasted until late in the evening. It represented in allegorical fashion the life of the corn from the day it was planted to the time it was cut down and gathered in; but the lesson sought to be inculcated was

nearly lost sight of by the spectators in their delight at the tricks of conjurors and the shrill vocal efforts of native musicians, who walked on and off the stage at any and every moment. The performance was repeated daily for three weeks, and was witnessed by thirty thousand people, many of whom remained until the end, sleeping in the carts which had brought them on their journey.

In different provinces there are different types of soldiers. The best of them are to be found in North China—great, upstanding fellows with the strength of oxen. These men were the objects of much anxious consideration in Peking in the early part of 1904. At that time General Ma, a military chief who actively sided with the Boxers in 1900, was stationed on the Manchurian border near Mongolia with fifty thousand troops. His movements were such as to attract the keen attention of the Russians, whose forces were disposed in such a manner throughout Manchuria as to invite attack from a strong and resolute foe. The general was one of the small but powerful party who urged upon his Government the desirability of China casting in her lot with

Japan and making common cause against the encroaching northern Power. A suggestion, a hint, and he would have struck hard, and universal war might have been the result. He knew the country well and his soldiers were the best in China, vast numbers of them being in league with the Chunchuses, whose activity was always a factor to reckon with in the Russian military occupation of Manchuria. The Russian Minister at Peking, M. Lessar, by forcible representations and threats of what would happen should China break her neutrality, frightened the authorities into removing General Ma and his troops to Chaoyang, a place at safe distance from the point of danger. The number of troops under his command was reduced to twenty thousand, and he received the most explicit instructions not to make any movement which might be used as an excuse by the Russians for an armed invasion of the territory west of the Liao River.

General Ma has the reputation of being the ablest commander in the Chinese Army, and however many his faults, he is without doubt a capable man in a service where there is general incapability. Unprepossessing in ap-

pearance, and rough and uncouth in his habits, he is more at home in the camp than in the town, having spent the major portion of his life with the Army. He dislikes all white men and their ways, but was one of the first of his countrymen to recognise, after the Chino-Japanese War, the wisdom shown by the Japanese in their adoption of forms of Western civilisation, and he eventually became an active member of the pro-Japanese party in China.

The removal of the large body of troops, which had been under his command, from the chief centre of bandit activity in the whole of the Chinese Empire, left lawlessness there with a free rein and gave a strong impetus to the operations of the daring Chunchuses against their bitterest enemy. In numerous cases they were supplied with the necessary ammunitions of war by the wealthy inhabitants of the country in return for a much-needed protection from robbery and outrage, and when they were unable to obtain supplies in any other way, they seized them by right of might. Their numbers were swelled by deserters from the native troops, who, on the whole, regarded them with friendly sentiments. The Government

officially took cognisance of the protests of the Russian Minister against the depredations and murders committed by these outlaws in territory at that time under the administration of Viceroy Alexeieff, and hundreds of wretched culprits, most of whom were not connected with the Chunchuses, were hanged at Moukden and elsewhere; but the real offenders were rarely brought to justice. Indeed, had the authorities made a determined effort to stamp out the Chunchuse movement they would have embarked upon a task beyond their powers. They did nothing, and the whole country, from beyond Shanhaikwan to Sinminting, became a land without any semblance of law and order, except in towns and villages where small camps of soldiers were stationed. Two of the Chunchuse chiefs with whom I am personally acquainted, who hold high positions in the Imperial Army of China, and who periodically visit Peking, organised large bands of Chunchuses during the summer and autumn of last year, the result being a determined and continual harassment of outlying Russian camps. Among these men were many Japanese; I saw the false pigtail pulled off the head of one in a scuffle. He was

dressed as a Chinaman, and, looking at him, no foreigner could have detected the disguise. These men, however, acted in defiance of instructions from Tokio, the Japanese Government having again and again discountenanced in every possible way the irregular mode of warfare waged by the more turbulent inhabitants of Manchuria against the Russian arms.

Being splendid horsemen, well armed, and mounted on the best ponies procurable on the hills and plains of Manchuria, supplied with an abundance of warm clothing and good food, and daringly reckless, the Chunchuses make admirable irregulars, and led by proper officers, properly treated, would prove to be excellent soldiers.

China has all the material for the composition of an army equal to her needs of self-defence, but she has as yet given no sign that she can utilise it. Her methods are worn out, and she is the prey of every country seeking for gain. The teeming myriads of her people know little of the meaning of the word "patriotism," because every other form of government is better than their own. But there is growing up a party able to make itself heard, and to express the dumb dissatisfaction of the whole nation at

the mismanagement of its affairs. These voices are almost inarticulate, choked by the accumulations of centuries of darkness and oppression; but they are there, struggling to make themselves heard, and here and there are dim glimmers of light. With the example ever before her of other countries spending thousands of millions of pounds a year on war and preparations for war, and holding their positions in the world by virtue of armed force, it would be surprising if China sooner or later did not wake up to a knowledge of her own potentialities and set to work to create an efficient Army. That any other Power should ever use the material ready to hand for its own aggrandisement would be a dire calamity for humanity. The progress of events in the Far East tends to indicate that China will be shown how to put her house in order by the wonderful people upon whom the eyes of the world are now turned in amazement and admiration. Such an event would only be the natural outcome of the determination of Japan to be the leading Power in her own sphere of influence. That is why the number of Japanese instructors in the Chinese Army steadily increases, and the sooner they have successfully

accomplished their work the better will it be for the peace of the world. The weakness of China in the face of stronger Powers, her inability to maintain order even within her own dominions, are menaces to civilisation fraught with terrible possibilities.

CHAPTER IX

THE MOUNTED BANDITS OF MANCHURIA

THE mounted bandits of Manchuria, known as Chunchuses, have played to a somewhat extensive degree the rôle of soldiers of fortune in the war between Russia and Japan. The existence of these men is due to a variety of causes, chief of which are their natural disinclination to hard work, and the utter inability of the Chinese authorities to exercise an effective government of the country. The name Chunchuses was first applied by the native inhabitants to foreigners, and signifies "red beards," and in time it came to be bestowed upon the bandits, who, be it remembered, keep their faces smooth like the majority of Chinamen, as a rule, seldom growing beards and moustaches. Until the Russian occupation of Manchuria little was heard of them; they pursued their wild calling practically immune from interference.

Foreigners travelling through the country were not, except in rare cases, molested, and indeed I know Englishmen who have been escorted from north to south of Manchuria by small bands of Chunchuses delegated for the purpose by their chiefs, who control their followers simply by force of personality and positions which often enable them to use strong influence in the Chinese viceregal yâmen. Rich native merchants travelling through the country are regularly held up and robbed on their journeys, the guards of soldiers with them invariably proving faithless to their trusts, either running away at the first sign of fighting, or offering no resistance to the bandits —even sometimes accepting bribes as the price of quiescence. Occasionally large numbers of Chinese troops march from place to place executing suspected characters, the guilty and the innocent suffering a like fate from indiscriminate judgment. But the Chunchuses have flourished and handed down their nefarious trade from father to son in the proverbial Chinese manner; and banditry is as much an institution of Manchuria to-day as it was centuries ago. Like all the other parts of the Chinese Empire,

the home of the Manchus has not altered its ways, good and bad, and clings hard to established custom.

When the Russian Government took over the administration of Manchuria a vigorous military campaign was commenced against the Chunchuses, and very soon it was discovered that the work of suppression was one of enormous magnitude. The configuration of the country was such that the Chunchuses, who knew the twist of every hill and dale from Newchwang to Harbin, defied all the efforts of the Russian soldiery to capture them. Scouting parties of Cossacks and Siberian riflemen, hunting for the bandits, were often surprised and attacked themselves, and the additions made to their numbers defeated the object aimed at by giving it too much publicity. The frequent captures and executions of comrades incensed the Chunchuses to renewed activity, instead of frightening them, and they waged a form of guerilla warfare against the foreign troops which it was impossible to stamp out. Mounted on the best ponies procurable by theft or purchase, being good marksmen with the rifles—imported from abroad by way of Tientsin and paid for by silver

dollars taken from the money bags of rich Chinese, or smuggled to them by friends in the native army, or captured in raids on small isolated Russian camps—of powerful and athletic build, and imbued with the desperate courage of the man who is well aware that if captured his life will pay the penalty of his misdeeds, they became to the Russian troops formidable enemies.

In the attempts made to destroy brigandage in Manchuria the Russians inadvertently increased the dislike with which they were regarded by the inhabitants. The Cossacks rode into villages and seized and shot men who were not Chunchuses, but peaceful people, and ill-treated villagers suspected of harbouring the culprits. As might be expected, the Chunchuses soon had the ordinary native enlisted on their side, and received secret encouragement from officials who hated the foreign usurpation of their own power, but were impotent to openly protest against it.

Owing to the frequent efforts made, often successfully, to damage the railway by Chunchuses, it was found necessary to increase the numbers of the guards along the whole line

from Port Arthur to Harbin, and six weeks before the war elaborate precautions were taken to safeguard bridges and lonely stations against the night raids which had become of such common occurrence. Galloping their hardy, game little native ponies at the highest speed, the Chunchuses would swoop down upon the railway in the darkness of the night, in parties of ten or fifteen, at the most unexpected places, and, dismounting, rapidly damage the rails or block up the way of an approaching train. Little real damage was done, but the danger existed at a time when war was imminent, and when every train running into Port Arthur was filled with troops and military stores. The Russian authorities could not afford to court by carelessness an organised attack on the railway by outlawed men, believed to be led and instructed how to act by experienced Japanese military officers, and so at short intervals along the whole line of railway guards were placed, communication with each other, if necessary, being secured by means of lighted torches of easily inflammable material.

It is a curious fact that the Russian soldier, who then knew nothing of the prowess of the

Japanese, should at that time have considered the Chunchuse as the enemy who would give him most trouble in the war, if war came. This idea also existed in ranks much higher than those of the common soldier.

The Chunchuses have, here and there, from time to time, become soldiers of Russia, living with the Cossacks, whom, in numerous ways, in their magnificent horsemanship, roving propensities, powers of endurance, and scanty wants they rather resemble; but, unfitted by the habits of their free life for military discipline, they always desert the regiments they happen to be attached to after a short spell of service, their only use having been to impart knowledge of the country to their alien masters. An acquaintance has thus been acquired by the Chunchuses with the ways and customs of the Russian troops which has served them well in their part in the war. With the aid of an interpreter I have talked with many of them, and have been surprised at the knowledge displayed of the Russian plan of campaign. That was in the summer and autumn of last year, when the Chunchuses were roaming the country between Shanhaikwan and Sinminting, and

plundering native villages in large and organised bands.

I was on my way to Newchwang from Tientsin by train on the Imperial Chinese Railway, soon after the Russian troops had crossed from the east to the west of the Liao River in observance of the declaration of neutrality, early in the spring of 1904. While the train was drawn up at one of the stations, the guard, an Australian, came into my compartment and directed my attention to several strange-looking Chinese who were walking up and down the platform, peering into the carriages and taking stock of every one who left or entered the train. They were all of them tall, strapping men, dressed quite differently from the other Chinese round about them. Black, red, yellow, and white handkerchiefs, knotted at the four corners, covered their heads, entirely concealing the queue, which was done up in the coil affected by the Chinese coolie when he is engaged in his work. They wore jackets of thick black cloth with brass buttons, trousers of the same material fitting tightly round the legs, Chinese riding-boots coming up to the knees. One of them, a portly, good-humoured looking man, with

rubicund face and ample stomach, wore a blue silk gown over his costume of the finest texture, and sported a tweed cap. Some of them carried riding-whips—short bamboos with pieces of thick string attached to the ends, and in the belt strapped round the waist of each was stuck a revolver. They had the appearance of having always lived in the open air, were alert and bright-eyed, and they made a vastly more favourable impression upon my mind than the Chinese soldiers who were standing in a row on the platform. I was told that they were Chunchuses, who had reappeared now that the Russians had gone, and that they spied on every train that went up and down the line. I noticed similar men at each station on the line after that until nearing Newchwang, and although the dresses worn were often different, frequently being the typical blue gowns of China thrown over the thick clothes with which the natives endeavour to keep warm in the cold weather, they all wore knotted handkerchiefs on their heads.

For some time I lost sight of Chunchuses, hearing now and again of gangs of them being beheaded at Moukden for their crimes, but later

on in the year I lived in the midst of them for two months.

With Newchwang taken by the Japanese, and with the exception of Vladivostock, many hundreds of miles to the north, without a base of supplies near the sea, the army under General Kuropatkin had to depend for its stores on the Siberian railway, and partly on the commodities supplied by the natives, and brought to Moukden by way of the Chinese railway from Tientsin to Sinminting. This was the opportunity the Chunchuses had been waiting for to steal with impunity, and their operations soon turned the country into a land without law or order. The Russian civil and military departments had enough to do to solve the problem of how to stop the advance of the victorious Japanese. The month of August saw Generals Oku, Kuroki, and Nodzu converging on the Russian forces at Liaoyang, and the useless mandarins, who were periodically sent in charge of a few hundred soldiers into the districts along the railway north of Shanhaikwan to preserve order, never stirred a mile from the town or village which they happened to make their head quarters. General Ma and his army were never

heard of, and it was pretty evident from what had gone before that if the general's supineness changed into activity the Russian troops would have to cross the river into the neutral sphere.

In the middle of August I went to Sinminting. On the train up were over two hundred Europeans, men and women—the human flotsam and jetsam cast up from calling steamers on the banks of the treaty ports of China, on the way to Moukden. The train stopped at every station and was boarded by armed Chunchuses, who acted as though the stations, railway, train and every one in it, belonged to them. They even rode their ponies up and down the platforms, and while we were entering one station the signal was dropped against us, and the train brought to a standstill to allow a party of them to cross the line. They carried Mauser rifles and pistols, and cased knives were stuck in their belts. Some of the faces I saw among them were the most evil I have ever gazed upon in my life; murder and violence seemed to be stamped on them in characters plain enough for every one to read. The Greeks with the women in the train looked apostles of peace and virtue compared to them. It is the custom for

a military guard of twenty or thirty men to march on to the platform of a station on the Chinese railway when a train arrives, present arms, stand at attention when the train is leaving, and maintain peace and order amongst the crowds of natives. And yet here were soldiers permitting these Chunchuses to do as they liked right under their noses. The native officer in command of them shouted out orders in the regulation voice and bated not a jot of his pomposity. It was a supremely ridiculous and yet pathetic sight to see and reflect upon—a farce in a land of innumerable farces, a good epitome of the character of the Chinese mandarin, whose peacock vanity is never ruffled by the humiliation of his country.

Bands of Chunchuses were crossing the line in several places, and I afterwards heard that they were going to the east of the river in the hope of plunder, and to look out for Russian stragglers. Upon arrival at Sinminting I was informed that a party of Chunchuses, led by four Japanese, had attacked and defeated a small number of Cossacks. There were ten Russian soldiers at the station, and from one of them I elicited the fact that the story was

true, and that the event was by no means an uncommon one. So frequent had become the attacks on Russian soldiers when in small force, or when isolated from the main body, that an army order had been issued cautioning men not to separate when away from the camp.

The Europeans who had come to Sinminting with me in the train found that the Chinese cartmen either refused to take them over the few miles of country to Moukden, or demanded preposterous fares, which they were unable to pay, for the journey. There is one Chinese inn at Sinminting, which is more fitted for the needs of thirty native coolies than those of even five white people. Towards this tenement walked the two hundred, followed by a great crowd of natives, among whom were numbers of children whose padded clothing gave them the appearance of human balloons. Days of rain had turned the roads into marshes, pools of water in places several feet deep filled the ruts, and passing carts splashed the pedestrians with mud from head to feet. After much voluble speech the owner of the inn agreed to take in twenty of the refugees at four dollars per head. The ordinary price for a Chinese

lodger at a native inn is a few cents, and as a dollar is worth two shillings, the landlord in this case made a fine thing out of the bargain. The difficulty was to find room for the twenty lodgers; but eventually, stacked like herrings in a barrel, they were disposed of in the four small rooms of the house, the Chinaman, his two wives, and large family, sleeping in the shop of one of his friends, but leaving a number of Chinamen to prowl round his premises, and see that none of the foreigners walked away with any of his possessions—the last thing in the world any sane person would have done, dirty blankets infested with vermin not appealing to the usual covetous desires. The other refugees were unable to find accommodation in Sinminting, and slept in the train, which did not return to Koupantzse until the following morning.

In a large room of the guard-house near the station I found a Chinese acquaintance, Captain Chang, sitting in a comfortable chair and smoking his pipe. On each side of him stood a table piled high with grapes of luscious colour and abnormal size. He told me of his latest joys and sorrows, speaking in excellent English, and

at my request wrote me out an introduction to General Z——, who organised the Chunchuses in the neighbourhood and directed their movements, although he was in the service of the Chinese Government. This man, said Captain Chang, was bad, but very clever, and made lots of money by brigandage. He had only recently offered the services of two thousand Chunchuses to the Japanese, but they had refused his offer. The offer was made by General Z—— through native agents; he was far too cute a man, added Chang, to make it direct himself. He would make one more offer to the Japanese, and then, if they refused a second time, he would take it to the Russians.

The next morning, after breakfasting with Chang, at whose house I had slept during the night, I found General Z—— busy inditing letters in one of his private rooms. He was a young man of medium height, fresh complexioned, with expressive dark eyes, straight nose, and beautiful white teeth. His face had a frank and open appearance, like that of a man who has never committed a wrong action, and has a perfectly clear conscience. His hands were small and well formed, the finger-nails

being rather long and tapering to sharp points. He wore an ordinary Chinese costume, and white-soled, black cloth boots. He received me courteously, and through the medium of my interpreter—he could not speak a word of English—paid me and my race lavish compliments, smiling enigmatically when I asked him what was his opinion of the Russians and Japanese. Presently, after much tea had been imbibed and cigars smoked, he requested me to wait for him while he retired and donned his uniform, and he would then show me his troops. During his absence I had leisure to note the things in the room. On the bare walls hung numerous scrolls and pictures on coloured papers of gods and goddesses: swords and spears were crossed over stringed bows, exceeding in number the jongs, pistols, and daggers which everywhere met the eye. Two handsome jade ornaments stood at each end of a shelf in the centre of which was an enormous silver bowl of exquisite workmanship. On the one long table, standing near the red-cushioned, wooden form built into the wall, was a cloth of yellow silk flowered in gold and silver threads; it seemed a crime against art to place on it

Chinese writing materials. The three chairs in the room were of black wood, figures of dragons with wide-open mouths being carved on the backs of them. A small glass window admitted light to the apartment, but there was no ventilator except the door. Communication with the next room was by an opening screened from sight by thick, red silk curtains. Through the window I saw a large courtyard, with the grass growing from the wide cracks in the flat stones, and pools of dirty, stagnant water filling up the hollows. Green trees and a high wall enclosed the yard, and behind the trees were low houses built of white stone, and roofed with cup-shaped tiles, on which grew moss and patches of tall grass. Chinese servants crossed and recrossed the courtyard from the narrow entrances through the wall, and a number of hungry-looking dogs, the scavengers of the place, sniffed round the pools for refuse. Bugle calls were repeated, the sound coming from close at hand, and I heard distinctly the noises of some sort of military preparation.

Very soon the general returned in a close-fitting riding costume of dark brown velvet, with boots to match, and a gold-embroidered

eap. A Mauser pistol and a gold-hilted sword in its seabbard were strapped round his waist. He now looked as much a soldier as shortly before he had looked a scholar. I passed with him out into the eourtyard, which we crossed, and entered a gateway on the other side leading into a large square surrounded by what were evidently the barracks of the native soldiers. A trumpeter heralded our approaeh, and in a few moments the soldiers, numbering three hundred, ninety of whom were mounted on Chinese ponies, were drawn up for inspeetion. The general mounted his white Mongolian pony and rode round the ranks, drawn up in semi-circular formation, the mounted men being in a straight line in front. They all looked hard and eapable troops, and their uniforms and weapons appeared to be well-kept. They wore red jackets, flat eaps of black eloth, black trousers, and boots to match. Later on they went through some drill exereises with much smartness. Despite their soldierly bearing and smart appearance I was not surprised to learn from various sources afterwards that they were not much better, from a moral point of view, than the Chunehuses, being prone to

indulge in nocturnal expeditions of a lawless character.

The spirit of freemasonry existing between the soldiers and the Chunchuses is easily understood when such things occur as I have pointed out, and when it is remembered that there is no strong and effective government of the country. The preservation of the integrity of the Chinese Empire is nowadays a political thesis of foreign governments interested in the Far East, but alone and unaided China cannot maintain the internal peace and quiet of Manchuria necessary for the development and protection of trade and commerce. Left to the care of the Chinese madarinate the country would offer few prospects to the foreign merchant. Its future settlement, whether by Japan or Russia, must be made in the interests of civilisation, without much consideration of the wishes of the Chinese Government.

CHAPTER X

WEST OF THE LIAO RIVER

During my sojourn in Manchuria, in the country west of the Liao River, I had occasion to frequently use the Chinese railway, which extends from Peking to Sinminting. It takes two days to accomplish the full distance between the two places, the train stopping overnight at Shanhaikwan and reaching Koupantzse the next afternoon, where a train waits in readiness for passengers to the north, the branch line going to Newchwang. Shanhaikwan is an ancient Chinese city near the coast of the Gulf of Liautung, distant seven hours by the railway from Tientsin. It is surrounded by a high wall of massive thickness pierced by gateways. Parts of the wall are in ruins, but the art of the old builder who laboured to make his work last for all time is still apparent in the age-defying strength of certain sections of it. Near the

railway station, and further out towards the sea, the few European residents, nearly all of whom are engaged on the railway, live in fine, large stone houses with their families. There is one hotel, which in the summer time is filled with guests, most of whom are attached to the foreign Legations in Peking, and visit Shanhaikwan each year. Between the city and the sea are stationed the camps of the troops who represent the international interests in the district. There is always an Indian regiment stationed there, and the German, French, Japanese, Russian, and Italian Armies are represented by forces of varying strength. The Chinese forts commanding the sea are occupied by mixed forces on the basis of an understanding arrived at between the foreign Powers and the Chinese Government after the Boxer revolt. The English and German camps are connected with the forts by trolley rails, the vehicles being drawn by mules, who invariably rush along at full gallop, often pulling the trollies off the track, and showing proverbial obstinacy whenever visitors are being taken down to see the forts. Number One Fort, as it is called, is in joint English and Russian occupation, but

since the outbreak of the war the Russian guard there has been reduced to four or five men. The rifle ranges for the use of the troops are excellent, and it is satisfactory to know that the Indian regiments which are stationed there from time to time are far and away the best marksmen, making quite phenomenal scores at the annual rifle meeting in the autumn. Between them and the British employés on the line—English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and Australians—the greatest rivalry is shown on this occasion; but the Indian soldier, who is remarkably keen on rifle practice, and receives every mark of encouragement from his officers, generally manages to carry off the principal triumphs. Between the troops of the different nationalities the greatest good feeling exists, owing, perhaps, to the close intercourse of the officers, who, isolated in this lonely outpost, are drawn together in brotherly spirit. Sport there is in plenty, and one can ride over rolling plain and giant hill for days together, though it is not safe for one to venture alone too far afield.

The English officers live in an old Chinese palace, two miles from the forts, which has

been fitted up to meet their requirements in a manner that makes it one of the most comfortable dwelling-places in North China. Round the large table of the commodious mess-room many jovial dinner parties have gathered, and many men, bearing famous names, passing through Shanhaikwan, have met with the hospitality of their military hosts. The officers of the other foreign regiments live in quarters stationed in compounds of their own, and one and all take vigorous part in the sports and social life of the place. Polo, cricket, and football are popular pastimes, the Indian troops showing a keen liking for the last-named game. Each night in the summer the band of one of the regiments plays in the gardens of the foreign hotel for the enjoyment of the numerous visitors.

Thirteen miles from Shanhaikwan is Chingwantao, where are the extensive coal mines of the Chinese Engineering and Mining Company. At this place also there is a small international garrison, Japanese interests, to judge from the flags flying from the summits of the hills near the railway station, being predominant. There is, however, a large amount of British capital invested there, which will

increase as the trade of the port expands when the fine but exposed harbour is protected by a breakwater.

From Shanhaikwan to Koupantzse the railway runs in places close to the sea shore, and passes near walled cities famous in Chinese history, where doughty deeds were done in days gone by, and where the people live and dress in the same way, and follow exactly the same habits and customs, as their ancestors did ten centuries ago. The station officials are all Cantonese—cleverer men than the Northern Chinamen, but not half so manly or honest as the people they come amongst, who hate them with a greater hatred than is felt for the foreigner. The conductors on the trains are all British, men who fought against the Boxers in 1900. Three white men live at the junction of Koupantzse and superintend the traffic of the railway. Their lives have often been in danger from bandits, who infest the neighbourhood, and things became so alarming in the summer of last year, owing to the resentment of the Chunchuses at the conduct of railway officials, who forcibly prevented the abduction from the trains of Chinese interpreters in Russian service, that a regiment of

native soldiers was sent up from Tientsin to guard them.

For several days I lived in the house of the district superintendent. Scores of Chunchuses, with whom were Japanese in Chinese dress, met the up and down trains, coming in from the villages in the neighbourhood. After dinner, sitting in the cool of the verandah, with the house surrounded by soldiers who slept most of the time they were supposed to be on watch, we would hear the noise of fierce encounters between Chunchuses and villagers. One fight in a village not two miles away lasted for six hours, the Chunchuses being beaten off with a heavy loss in killed and wounded. Before a village is attacked the Chunchuses always give the inhabitants a chance of paying down a fixed sum of money, or of delivering up goods of a certain value, and if the demands are refused an attack is made in the night. Many of the wealthier natives protect their houses with mud forts strengthened by piles of heavy stones built up on the inside and defended by jongs, clumsy but formidable weapons when in the hands of men who know how to use them. In the field the jong is manipulated by three men, two of

whom support it on their shoulders while the marksman takes aim and pulls the trigger. This weapon, however, is gradually being discarded in the Chinese Army, and is now only a familiar object in small towns and villages.

Thirteen miles to the west of Koupantzse is the city of Kwanming, nestling in the midst of acres of fruit-trees at the foot of a lofty mountain range. Here grapes, pears, apples and other kinds of fruit grow in wild profusion, attaining a size and delicious flavour to be found nowhere else in the world except in California. A Scotch Presbyterian minister and his wife, and a French priest in charge of a Catholic mission, are the only foreign people living there. It is the chief Chunchuse centre in Manchuria, some thirteen thousand Chunchuses living within a radius of twelve miles of the city. So strong was this nest of outlaws found to be by the Russians that they left it untouched during the time they occupied the country. The chief Chunchuse of this district is a man with a rather remarkable history. Sixteen months ago he succeeded in escaping from the island of Saghalien, where he had been condemned to penal servitude for life in the mines, for being concerned in acts

of outlawry near Moukden, where sentence of punishment was passed upon him by the Russian authorities. Upon his return to Manchuria he organised bands of Chunchuses for the purpose of harrying the Russians, and was the chief promoter of the numerous attempts made to damage the railway in South Manchuria before it was guarded in an effective manner.

While both Russians and Japanese were preparing for the great encounter before Liaoyang, an American acquaintance of mine visited Kwanming with a letter of introduction he had procured to this chief. He took his camera with him, intending to take snapshots of what he saw, having heard that there were Japanese with the Chunchuses. He received a cordial welcome from the chief, and after a day spent in sight-seeing, sat down to dinner with his host in a Chinese inn. Everybody in the place had heard of his arrival, and the inn was surrounded by a crowd of natives, stirred by desire to see the stranger. In the middle of dinner the babel of sound outside swelled suddenly into an uproar, and without any warning having been given several shots were fired at the walls and through the open windows of the inn. The chief rushed

outside in a terrible temper, for there is nothing a Chinaman resents more than an act of discourtesy to his guest, and the uproar was finally quelled after a perfect hurricane of abuse and explanation. The real reason of the alarming interruption was never explained, but from what I heard I surmised that there were individuals with the Chunchuses who were angry at the thought that they were being spied upon. That Japanese did co-operate with the Chunchuses I had abundance of proof time after time, having talked with them on various occasions; but I never saw or heard anything to make me suspect that they were acting with the sanction of their Government. Even if they were doing so the example had first been set by the Russians, who used the Chunchuses wherever possible. The country lying west of the River Liao is at present far more a no-man's-land than that where all the fighting has taken place, and breaches of neutrality are committed there by the representatives of the supposed rulers of Manchuria as grave as any committed with the cognisance of either Russian or Japanese combatant.

The interpreters who before the war gave

away the freedom and lives of natives wanted by the Russians are special objects of Chunchuse hate, and are seized and shot on sight. The vast plains, when covered in the summer and autumn with millet standing eight and ten feet high, form ideal hiding-places for the Chunchuses, and into this natural cover they hurry their victims and leave them dead, the bodies being riddled with shots. When the fields of millet are cut down in the last days of September the Chunchuses retire to the hills and mountains, or go to the big towns, where they mingle with the inhabitants and live peaceful and innocent lives.

When direct communication by rail with Port Arthur was interrupted, Russians used the Chinese railway to Sinminting, about thirty miles west of Moukden, to reach North Manchuria. At first adventurers and worthless characters in hundreds flocked northwards in hope of gain; but, later on, owing to the Russian military restrictions, and the trouble caused to travellers by the Chunchuses between Sinminting and Moukden, the number dwindled until eventually only people on legitimate business used the line. Many miserable wretches,

women as well as men, were deposited from the train at Sinminting, only to be taken into a Chunchuse ambush, and there insulted, robbed, and sometimes terribly maltreated, returning in a far worse condition than they were in before they started on their journey. Many refugees drifted into Shanhaikwan on junks from Port Arthur and migrated to the north, and special trains carrying anxious Russian officials were running at all hours of the day and night along the line. Large quantities of stores were sent this way from Tientsin for the Russian army: but the traffic was soon practically destroyed by the interference of the Chunchuses, whose activity in that little stretch of country from the terminus of the railway, Sinminting, to the ancestral home of the Manchu dynasty, intimidated the native carters from conveying the stores. Russian troops were, however, eventually sent in strong force to convoy the stores, and the hill roads to Tiehling, the then strongly fortified Russian position north of Moukden, were used and kept open by armed force. Since then Sinminting has been taken by the Japanese, into whose possession fell great quantities of Russian stores hidden in the town.

The long and mountainous ridge of hills on the west side of the Liao Valley is a formidable natural barrier, and in the hands of a strong and capable military Power would be impregnable to attack. Hidden among these hills the outlaws of Manchuria can laugh at the efforts of search-parties to find them with a feeling of security. Whatever Power is destined to shape the future of Manchuria, it will find that the native bandit must be suppressed before there is peace and order in the land.

The lives of the labouring people in Manchuria are similar in almost every detail to those of the inhabitants of other parts of the Chinese Empire. The differences are those of physical and mental attributes. The native one sees in the streets of Shanghai is a very poor creature by the side of his northern brother. He is crafty and cunning, and has numerous excellent business qualifications, but he possesses few manly qualities. The native of North China could throw him over his head with ease, and beat him in any physical exercise, and he could teach him many lessons in cleanliness and morality. He is as a rule happy and contented with his lot, and despite his

starvation pay and daily bowl of rice, extracts a lot of enjoyment out of life. The climate he is favoured with is a good one, and the soil supplies all his wants. He prefers the life of the country to that of the town, and perhaps that is the secret of his health and strength. Even a Chinaman must thrive better in pure air and clean surroundings than in the atmosphere of the crowded town. In the southern provinces of China an enormous quantity of opium is smoked, but I saw very few traces of its use in Manchuria. There the men smoke tobacco in wooden pipes, cigars, and cigarettes, which are supplied them at astonishingly low prices by American and native manufacturers.

The native houses are built of brick and stone, surrounded by low mud walls, or by fences of dried millet-stalks. In the ordinary native cottage there are three rooms, one for living and the other two for sleeping purposes. The beds, rugs of coarse fur or cloth, are made up on benches fixed into the wall. Paper windows are the rule, although glass is now being more commonly used every year. After a long day spent in the open air, a day of labour which lasts from sunrise to sunset, the native does not

as a rule want to do anything but eat, smoke, and retire to rest. It is an uncommon thing to find any one stirring in a Manchurian village an hour or two after dark.

In times of peace Manchuria is the home of many species of wild animals, including the tiger; but the war has driven them to pastures new, Mongolia being a favourite place of refuge. In Mongolia the power of Russia was before the war strongly seated, the scattered and nomadic inhabitants being familiar far more with its signs than with those of Chinese sovereignty. Many of the Cossack regiments were recruited from the horsemen of the country, the free, wild life of these pioneers of the Muscovite Empire appealing with magnetic force to men whose own lives are led in the open desert, on the shelving plain, and in the recesses of the hills. In Mongolia the primitive inhabitants rarely hear news of the outside world, and know extremely little of what is transpiring in the troubled land so near to their own.

In the desolation which reigned last year from the south of the Liautung Peninsula to the district round Moukden was afforded a striking contrast to the picture of plenty presented on

the western plains of the Liao Valley. The earth had yielded a record harvest, and I rode day after day, for many weeks in succession, along the narrow roads, through acres of waving corn ripening under the burning sun, turning from green to yellow by imperceptible changes, and at last arriving at maturity ready for the hand of the gleaner. The eye could not escape from these universal signs of the promise of the season. And yet, not many miles away, half a million men were seeking to destroy each other and laying bare the earth. The disturbing influences of the conflict threw their mantle over men who at every time obey impulses to rob and murder, and who regarded the time as opportune to wipe off old scores, sell their services to the highest bidder, and loot friend or foe ; but the impassive native who worked on his plot of land all day, or, too old and infirm to labour, sat among the children at play in the village streets, took no more interest in the tragic game being played, with the control of his country as the stake, than he would have taken in a fight between two dogs. No news of blood poured into the soil like water disturbed his serenity, which was like unto that of a man

in a calm sleep. Questioned as to what he thought of the war, his replies made it apparent that he did not think of it at all. What all the rest of the world was talking about did not trouble him in the slightest degree. And the hordes of native refugees who poured across the river seemed to forget the experiences they had gone through directly they reached a place of safety—appeared not to remember even what they had lost and left behind them. Their philosophy was not born yesterday.

CHAPTER XI

THE WINTER FIGHTING IN MANCHURIA

In the summer and autumn a delightful land to live in, Manchuria during the winter months is a country where only the most robust and hardy constitutions can endure the rigours of the climate. The Arctic temperature itself need not be dreaded by an active man; on a clear day there is always a genial warmth in the rays of the sun. But when the wind is blowing, as it is in six out of the seven days in the week, there are few places in the world where human beings are subjected to more acute discomfort and suffering. To secure the least moiety of comfort one must live in a thick-walled, stone house, heated by a stove reaching from the floor to the ceiling, and protected by double doors and windows; wear furs from head to foot while in the open air, and be constantly on the move to keep alive the circulation of the blood. The

native of Manchuria is not remarkable for activity, but during the winter he develops, speaking comparatively of his usually slothful mode of perambulation, into an accomplished athlete. Every river and stream in the country is frozen over, the roads ring to the clattering hoofs of the ponies like iron, snow falls and is quickly turned into blocks of ice which cover the landscape in every direction, giving reluctant tribute in the shape of millions of powdery particles to the fierce winds night and day. In every part of Manchuria there is the same intense cold; no secluded spot gives shelter from the presence of winter in its most forbidding aspect.

The cold season sets in towards the end of September: even in the latter part of August the nights are chilly, and one is obliged to sleep with plenty of blankets on the bed to keep the body warm, and before the end of April it is not wise to move about without an overcoat. By the first week in November the waterways are closed to foreign and native shipping, and not until March are they again available for purposes of traffic. In other countries the frozen rivers are turned into

highways of commerce; but in Manchuria the winds turn the freezing water into clefts and hummocks which become solid as marble, and render pedestrianism a slow and difficult performance, and such a pastime as skating an impossibility. In the early part of last year I endeavoured to cross from one side of the Liao River to the other in an ice-boat with a small but rebellious sail, and came to utter grief before I had gone far against a ridge of ice which appeared to run in an unbroken line for miles. The native boatman, with his customary procrastination, defers taking his junk from the river until many of his friends are killed and injured through their junks being smashed by grinding ice-floes, though when the thaw commences he displays an impatience foreign to his character to be once more sailing through the water. The hundreds of native boatmen and fishermen thrown out of employment by the winter season in Manchuria and North China have as a rule sufficient resources to enable them to live without fear of death by starvation until they are able to resume their normal labours. The fish caught during the summer, and dried and preserved for future

consumption, and the rice stored away in canvas bags, supply them with food; for fuel they have bundles of millet stubbles wrested from the earth in the late autumn after the harvest is over, and the cheapest of cheap furs and sheep- and dog-skins keep them warm when they are out of doors. The junks, drawn high on the banks of the rivers, covered over with mats and skins to keep out the snow and wind, and heated by stoves kept burning day and night, form residences preferable to the ordinary native houses.

The same climatic conditions exist, with little difference, from the far north of Siberia to the south of Corea, and, to a somewhat less extent, throughout the northern part of Japan. Thus both the Russians and Japanese are more or less acclimatised to the sort of winter they have had to face and encounter in Manchuria. The Russian troops, essentially fitted for a winter campaign, were thought in the beginning of last year to be better equipped by nature than the Japanese for the work of fighting in the frost-bound hills and vales of North Corea, by people all over the world who gave a thought to the war. So ignorant were they in St. Petersburg

of the climate of Corea that an order was actually given to army contractors for several hundred thousand short overcoats to be made for the use of the soldiers who were going to march south across the Yalu, the impression being that as the Corean temperature never registered many points below zero, the regulation long overcoat issued to the home and Siberian regiments would be unnecessary encumbrances to the free movements of the troops, and the order was not countermanded, in spite of expert advice, until Viceroy Alexeieff had sent home from Port Arthur a strongly worded representation on the subject, pointing out the necessity for continuing to provide overcoats cut on the old pattern. It was pointed out again and again with circumstantial detail how the Japanese would freeze to death while the Russian glowed with health in his natural element, and strode forward through the driven snow to victory. The northward march of the Japanese from Seoul to Pingyang in an exceptionally severe season in part dispelled that illusion; but the trifling skirmishes that were fought then between outposts did not attract sufficient attention to the fact that the Japanese was

every whit as good as the Russian when it came to shifting for himself and fighting hard in snow-covered dale and on frozen morass. Prophecy was silenced until the autumn, and then again it made itself heard over the woful fate in store for the little, brown man. The clothes of the Japanese army were not thick enough, and the boots were so thin that the Japanese feet inside them would all be bitten by the frost. The hard, stern forces of nature were going to accomplish what the Russians found so difficult to do themselves. But beyond the cases of death and sickness from exposure which must always attend the campaign of a large army of men in every part of the world, the Japanese have not met with more casualties due to changed climate than the Russians, who, however, have had to endure hardships which the Japanese have escaped, owing to limited facilities of transport.

The fighting which occurred on the banks of the Shaho in the early winter took place in terribly cold weather, which, coming so soon in the season, upset all the calculations of statesmen and generals, and caused intense suffering to the Russian and Japanese troops, who had not yet

changed their summer for winter uniforms. Men died in a single night from the cold in hundreds, and many more lost the use of feet and hands from the same cause. The wounded were frozen stiff on the battle-field before relief arrived and their blood turned to hard lumps on the granite-like earth. There is no free press in either Russia or Japan to discuss the reason of the soldiers of the nation being clothed for summer when the snow is piled up in great drifts over the entire country and the ice is forming on the rivers, and little was heard at the time of events which, if they had happened in South Africa during the Boer War, or during one of the punitive expeditions of the United States army against the Indians, would have raised a howl of indignation which would have swept legislators from office. Besides, the Japanese people are content to let their governmental departments transact business without interference; perhaps they have an inborn conviction that their rulers can do no wrong, and the Russians know very well that their reward for agitation to investigate evils is not conducive of joy, whatever it may savour of martyrdom.

In time the necessary personal equipments for

the armies were forthcoming, and, as the weather increased in severity, the fighting of big battles dwindled to isolated artillery duels and skirmishes between opposing columns detached from the main forces of either army. Snow fell night and day, covering up old landmarks, pressing down the branches of the trees to the ground, levelling the broken country into one vast white plain, the appearance of which was saved from monotony by soaring white hills and mountains, and driving hard in the face of man and beast. Often the wind blew with resistless force, and the hosts of armed men were powerless to harm each other and remained inactive in their camps. Yet the ceaseless activity of preparation for the conflict to mark the end of the winter vigil went on and increased day by day. From north and south came the trains, day and night, with men, more men, and the bodily requirements of men. Every source of food and water was tapped in the surrounding country and exhausted in turn. The Japanese, as the price of perfect organisation and victory on sea and land, were enabled to beat their enemy in the art of reinforcement from home, and draw upon the country to the south for

great quantities of supplies. The Russians had their Siberian railway and the market towns north-west of Moukden, standing at intervals in a line which ran north-north-west into the interior of Mongolia, but these last independent sources of supplies were at any moment liable to be cut off by Japanese activity. So the short days and long nights passed by in quick succession. Occasionally a skirmish developed into a bloody battle, thousands of lives being sacrificed, and positions were taken at the point of the bayonet, the hands of wounded soldiers freezing tightly to the rifles they clutched in desperate grasp. The guns would start to roar, impatient of idleness, and grey smoke drifted in thick columns over the white hills. Ever nearer and nearer crept the advanced guards of the two great armies, and ever more extended became the opposing lines. Russian and Japanese at last gazed at each other over the crests of snow-covered defence works, and in the silence of the night they could hear the raised voices of each other and the music of the regimental bands. Desirous of successful effort, yet fearful of running the risk of plunging more than half a million of men into a conflict

not only with each other, but with the iron force of nature, a general often initiated a movement having for its object the destruction of a certain force of the enemy, or the capture of an important position; and when several thousand casualties had been sustained, and perhaps a slight advantage gained, there once more reigned an armed and watchful peace. Useless slaughter where human life was so cheap was in the nature of a relaxation from the monotony of waiting for the Big Event.

The New Year saw the fall of Port Arthur, and the war-worn troops of General Nogi joined the Japanese armies in front of Moukden. The guns that had overcome the walled defence of the fortress were now mounted in positions overlooking the host under the command of General Kuropatkin, and it was not long before their bark was heard in these new surroundings. The Japanese line of battle grew to the distance of eighty miles. Bands of Chunchuses deserted guerilla warfare and joined regular forces of Japanese and Russian soldiery. They were sent, from the Japanese side, towards Mongolia and the market towns from which the Russian army secured part of its supplies, to stop the

traffic coming from that direction. Encircling movements were attempted by either army, and stubborn attempts were made to take fortified hills and bridges. This was a sign that the time of the Big Event was approaching, and the echo of its rustle was audible in the four corners of the world. Each side met with varying success in these preludes to the next campaign, but on the whole there was not much achievement of real worth. The spirit of vague unrest crept into the Russian army with the advent of the news of the fall of Port Arthur and the domestic strife in Russia. The task of General Kuropatkin became doubly harder as this spirit spread, and he had to cope with it and with recalcitrant subordinates, and with the enormous difficulties of combating and overcoming the errors of an inefficient system. The days lengthened, the sunshine increased in power, and the wind tempered its fierceness with inconsistent moderation for a day or two, to rage with trebled fury again, however, as if in anger at its momentary weakness. But the dark night of winter had nearly past, and one day the guns along the eighty miles of the Japanese front burst into flame and smoke.

In the passes of the mountains the infantrymen marched onward to battle, and cavalry met in noisy clash on the plain, through the white mantle of which peered here and there the fresh earth. But still not yet was there a great concerted movement of the Russian and Japanese armies. The one still guarded the capital city of Manchuria, and watched for the advance of the other across the plains of the Hunho. But the restlessness that stirred them was the signal that the eve of the Big Event was near.

A sudden advance of the Japanese on the right, and a series of ferocious bayonet attacks delivered in daylight and darkness, broke the formation of the Russian front line. Then came another interlude, more dreadful than death to the men picked up wounded on the field of battle and taken to shelters cramped for space and bitter with cold, followed by a development of the Japanese attack, which was met by stout resistance. The fighting, unlike that of the previous three months, did not cease, but continued day after day, and fresh regiments hastened forward to join the battalions dwindling under the hail of fire like flies in the

breath of the monsoon. It was evident that the Big Event had come, and the din of war called forth from the earth into which they had burrowed the opposing hosts of armed men. From east to west crawled the line of fire, and its indentations marked the positions rushed by the Japanese and used by them for renewed offensive movements. The prodigal sacrifice of life was on a scale unprecedented in modern history, and never before had such mighty armaments been used in warfare. The glare of the snow in the sunlight during the day was intensified at night by the devilish star-shells and the red flare of burning villages. Men dropped wounded to the ground. and were stiff as boards in five minutes, their own blood becoming ice as it flowed from their wounds. and sealing them fast down to their doom. In the wild conflict clothes and boots were torn and worn through, and there broke out an epidemic of frost-bitten limbs. The men attacked were inspired with the desperation born of the knowledge of the horrors of a retreat before a pursuing enemy at that time of year : the men who attacked were animated by the remembrances of past triumphs and an intelligent

knowledge of the magnitude of the prize so close to their grasp. Ramparts of corpses, turned hard as stone by the frost, were formed by storming parties of Japanese, against which the bullets of the Russian troops rattled like hailstones on an iron roof. In the welter of carnage human life became so cheap that no thought was paid to the annihilation of whole regiments; to slaughter and be slaughtered was the impulse which fired the brain of the soldier.

From position to position the vast army of Russia was driven back by the still vaster army of Japan. The pressure tightened, and at last the human wedge was driven across the line of the retreat. The mighty battle swept from point to point, across hill and dale, the list of dead swelling to one of portentous size. One by one the sources of supplies from the south-west and west, upon which the Russian army in part relied, were closed, and death from starvation was added to the horrors of the conflict. Before this even the terrible but pathetic courage of despair shown by the Russian soldier could not avail, and he sought refuge in flight. Hemmed in on all sides by the victors, he staggered northwards, falling lifeless from

exhaustion, meeting merciful death from an exploding shell thrown after him, or in the moment when he turned savagely on his foe for one last blow, and everywhere he was surrounded by evidences of the crowning disaster falling upon his country. The Big Event was one of the great chapters of history, and as usual, the names of the men without whom it could not have been achieved were never heard of, and will never be known by the world.

CHAPTER XII

THE OUTLOOK

In one short year the political outlook in the Far East has undergone a complete transformation. Before the war the influence of Russia was the most powerful factor in foreign diplomacy at Peking, and that influence was spreading with rapid strides over the length and breadth of North China, and even penetrating to the south of the Yangtse Valley, the one region where British interests predominate over all those of the rest of the world put together. The promise to evacuate Manchuria had been ignored, and measures were passed which could only mean that the three provinces were virtually annexed to the Russian Empire. Foreign merchandise was penalised to an extent which practically closed the markets of the country against it, barriers even being set up against commerce in the treaty port of

Newchwang in defiance of the protests of the great business nations of the West. Millions of pounds were spent on Dalny and Port Arthur, and Admiral Alexeieff was created a Viceroy with power of life and death over the millions of natives who were supposed to be subjects of the Chinese Emperor. The officials of the Chinese railway were being replaced by Russians, and along the railway the Russian language was heard at the different stations, Russian soldiers paraded the platforms, and Russian names appeared on the sign-boards. In every direction the Russianisation of Manchuria was being carried out, and beyond uttering useless protests the weak and corrupt Government in the Chinese capital dared not insist upon an investigation into and an explanation of the situation.

The bluff which had won Manchuria was next applied to Corea, and would have succeeded had not Japan been in a position to cry halt, to proceed to insist upon the justice of her demands by force of arms, and to place the country under a protectorate. The rapid march of events which followed the introduction at Seoul of the adventurous policy of M. Pavloff

marked the beginning of the momentous campaign which was to set a limit to Russian ambition in the Far East. During the spring and autumn of 1903 the Chinese Government showed a firmer attitude than theretofore in their request for promises from the Russian Minister respecting the evacuation of Manchuria. The strong moral support of Japan was behind this attitude, and the knowledge of this acted as an incentive to the progressive classes of Chinese to make their voices heard in an endeavour to strengthen the influence of the few patriotic statesmen who really had the welfare of the Empire at heart. From the Empress-Dowager and her clique nothing could be expected. One day the Royal lady would stamp her foot with rage on hearing of some real or fancied desecration committed by materialistic Cossacks in Moukden, the home of the dynasty, and threaten impossible reprisals ; the next day her conduct would suggest that an alliance between China and Russia was the one thing she desired to see brought to a consummation. The typical mandarin still clung to the belief that all races except the Chinese were barbarians, and in his heart

despised the Japanese for relinquishing old customs, and adopting the progressive policy of the West.

But the intercourse between Japan and China grew by leaps and bounds, acquiring something in the nature of a racial alliance. The similarity of their written language, and the many beliefs held in common by the inhabitants of the two lands, constituted a bond of union, however slight, and similarities of thought not appreciated by Europeans found expression in the literature of either people. The war which ended in the decisive victory of Japan over her huge neighbour opened the eyes of intelligent Chinese to the virtues of radical reform, and thus a widespread interest was aroused in Japanese institutions. Students who had before been educated with a view to being sent to Europe and America were now despatched to Japan, and it became the custom among men who, while desirous to see reforms introduced into their Government, yet preserved the old dislike to the white man, to send their children to Japanese schools and colleges in preference to having them educated in schools at home. Thus quite a new spirit was introduced into

China, and when Japan took up the championship of the cause of China over the Manchurian question her prestige became assured, and her popularity increased among all classes.

When Russia, after October 8th, 1903, showed by every act of colonial legislation that she had no intention of fulfilling her promise of evacuating Manchuria, which should have been carried out by that date, in all the populous cities of China meetings of the literati were held at which the conduct of the northern Power was denounced in vehement and unsparing terms. The Government was called upon to defend the rights of the Chinese nation by force of arms, and pitiable as such a suggestion was in view of the military inefficiency of the country, it demonstrated that there existed a national patriotism which at least could make its voice heard. Resolutions were passed indicative of the feeling of the meetings, which represented numerous provinces, and these were forwarded to Peking, where a party powerful, though small in numbers, favoured co-operation with Japan in the coming fight for the restitution of Manchuria. The Government hesitated and wavered, formulating demands on Russia one day and

repudiating them the next, and in the end it did nothing, for the simple reason that chaos and confusion and red-hot corruption, which sucked every atom of healthy life from all forms of the administration, as they have sucked it for centuries, paralysed any attempt at effective action.

Perhaps it was just as well for the ultimate salvation of China that this was so, and that Japan was able to take up the struggle without being hampered by the material assistance of an untrustworthy ally, for if China had thrown in her lot with Japan it is pretty certain that there would have ensued a universal scramble for the most appetising fruit in the Chinese orchard. Japanese diplomats recognised this, and it was due largely to their efforts that China was kept out of the quarrel. Nothing would have done Japan more injury than a war in which she fought side by side with China.

The result of the agitations in open meeting and in the native press was that the innumerable millions of Chinese who are destined from the cradle to be swallowed up in the mighty mass of their countrymen and never heard of again, became interested in the Japanese, who

were represented as being the saviours of their country. These same Japanese had come to China in 1900, and, while the rest of the allied troops were guilty of inhuman acts, had scrupulously treated the innocent natives with kindness and consideration. All this was now retold with added interest, and it was pointed out in the columns of the native newspapers, which circulate in the tea-shops of every town in the country, how allied the Japanese were to the Chinese in race and custom, how close was the proximity of the two countries, and how all white men who came to China came for their own good, and not for the good of China.

Throughout the length and breadth of the land the news travelled, and everywhere it made an impression. In the cities and towns it was eagerly discussed and talked over, this projected stand of a small Asiatic nation against the might of a nation of the mysterious whites, and an excitement that was altogether new to the national temperament made itself felt in men's minds.

The national bias against Russia was further fomented by reason of many causes which to

the foreigner would appear insignificant, but which were important enough to the Chinese, and I will cite one of them. It has been the custom ever since the establishment of the Manchu dynasty in China to hold a yearly examination of students in literature at Moukden. Young Chinamen from far distant provinces of the Empire attend these annual ceremonies, enduring the hardships and dangers of travel buoyed up by belief in their own powers to achieve success and distinction. If there is one branch of learning venerated more than another by the average Chinaman it is the study of the literature of his country, success in which brings with it honours and preferment in this world, and a reputation which will be handed down with pride to the last descendant of the family. All classes of Chinese take part in the examinations, there being no barriers to prohibit the entries of the poorest scholars.

In the autumn of 1903 the usual preparations for the examination were made, but at the last moment they were peremptorily stopped by order of the Russian military authorities, and the Literary Chancellor of Fengtien, the head examiner, was expelled from the city. To

forbid the holding of the examination was regarded as a sacrilege by the Chinese, and the expulsion of the Chancellor from Moukden was considered as immeasurably increasing the enormity of the crime. This act, and the seizure and imprisonment of Chinese officials for no other explainable reason than that they were the representatives of the central Government at Peking, enraged even those who were friendly to Russia, and was partly responsible for the military activity in China, which even alarmed Russia, twelve months ago last December.

The care which the Japanese have taken to save Moukden as much as possible from the fire of battle will be long remembered by the Chinese in conjunction with the incidents which attended the Russian occupation of the city before the war.

The war came, and found the Chinese Government vacillating over the choice of making either Japan or Russia its friend. Jealous and suspicious of the motives of Japan, and fearful that Russian victory would be the signal for increased territorial aggrandisement, it sat on the fence, and has not even yet quite made up its mind to leave it. Meanwhile the

forward party in China has enormously increased in strength and influence ; the number of students leaving each month for Japan has grown to figures which no one would have thought possible a year ago ; Japanese military instructors have everywhere replaced Europeans, and Japanese educationists are being given positions in other departments. The Russianisation of Manchuria in theory was the prelude to the Japanisation of China in practice. The process of evolution may be one of a century, but that it will be one of successful attainment is the belief of Japanese and Chinese observers, each day growing in strength.

The increasing trade between China and Japan will receive a tremendous impulse as a result of the war. Much of the Chinese coastal shipping trade is now in the hands of Japanese firms, and river ports, where formerly only steamers flying the British and Chinese flags were seen, are now visited by Japanese vessels, which are run with a cheapness and economy with which foreigners cannot compete. The old established British shipping firms have as yet hardly felt the effects of this new competition, but it has affected the profits of the German

shipowners from the ports of the province of Shantung to Shanghai. With an inexhaustible labour supply on the spot, procurable at rates even lower in proportion than those paid by foreigners in the Chinese labour markets, the future of the maritime trade of Japan is one of assured prosperity.

The readiness with which the Japanese acquire a knowledge of the Chinese language is another important factor in the situation—one, indeed, of overwhelming importance. The Japanese merchants who form such a large proportion of the treaty ports all speak the native language with an ease and fluency impossible to a foreign tongue. Living often the life of the people, and adapting themselves to the ways and customs of the country with an astonishing quickness, they at once pass the boundary which for ever must divide the Chinaman and the white. In the future, then, we must look for an ever-growing Japanese influence in the foreign relations and home affairs of the Chinese nation. The Anglo-Japanese alliance has not only made that possible, but inevitable, and the far-seeing statesmanship that was responsible for it will not have completed its

great work without there is a renewal of the alliance.

The position of Great Britain in the Far East before the text of the famous agreement was published in London and Tokio was not one that could be viewed without uneasiness by those of us who wished to see an increase of the power and a development of the trade of our country in that part of the world. Markets which we first opened up at the expense of untold millions of money and thousands of lives were being taken from us by other countries. Russia and Germany were working with growing success to supplant British influence in Peking, and to establish claims in direct opposition to those which we had enjoyed for years by right of vastly preponderating interests. The sleepless energy of Germany to obtain not alone equal, but preferential rights, in the Yangtse Valley was observed with alarm by British merchants in the Far East, whose efforts to bring a true knowledge of the situation before the home Government were not as a rule attended with the success they deserved. In North China British enterprise was met at every turn by Russian opposition of a strenuous description,

and France lent silent but strong support to her ally. The trade we had built up at such enormous labour and cost was being attacked on every hand by unscrupulous and powerful rivals, who understood in every detail the extent and value of the prize for which they were working, and who sent out their ablest representatives to the centres of commerce which offered the best prospects. Except in Chifu, merchants of British nationality in Shantung stood no chance against German competition, and that rich province soon became to all intents and purposes a dependency of the German Empire. The bold attempt to station German troops in Shanghai for an indefinite period after the suppression of the Boxer revolt elicited a timely protest from the British Government, at the same time opening its eyes to the real nature of German attempts at expansion in China, and since then our interests there have been guarded with increased vigilance.

A few months before the Anglo-Japanese alliance was made Great Britain was less powerful in China than at any previous time. Since then she has regained all her former prestige, while that of other European countries

has suffered deterioration. The tentacles of the Russian octopus have been cut, and the demands formulated on Peking from St. Petersburg are now treated with an indifference in striking contrast to the servile respect shown to them twelve months ago. The political aims of Germany, always in direct antagonism to those of Great Britain, are for the moment ended by the unexpected overthrow of her neighbour, and the statesmen of Berlin must think of another policy before their country can have again the voice of recent years in the affairs of China. In the south France has enough problems to solve, without wishing to attract marked attention from Japan by undue political activity in the Legations of the capital, and she has not shown a disposition to sacrifice the goodwill and friendship of Japan in that part of her colonial empire, at least, by breaches there of neutrality.

The impetus given to British trade and influence by virtue of the Anglo-Japanese alliance is seen in many ways. The reorganisation of our naval and military defences from Singapore to Hongkong and the commissioning of a strong fleet of destroyers for river work

in China in place of the gunboats relegated to the reserve, the steadying effect on our trade and the opportunities afforded us by the political situation of entering new markets opened to the commerce of the world by the war, the indirect result of the alliance, are of incalculable value. By virtue of her alliance with Japan, Great Britain has been placed in a position of commanding superiority over her rivals. If the alliance is renewed it is unlikely that she will lose that position.

To carry out the salvation of China it is necessary for Japan to be the ally of Great Britain for a number of years. The severance of the alliance would be the signal for a recommencement of the political intrigues of different nations, greedy of territorial expansion in the Far East, which has for the last ten years made China the country towards which the world has looked for the first spark of an explosion which would cause a universal upheaval. The only nation fitted by nature to avert that catastrophe is the Japanese; at the mercy of Russia the Chinese Empire would become a danger to mankind. Like ourselves, the Japanese are, above everything else, a trading people, and

exercising the enormous influence in the affairs of China that they naturally would at the end of a successful war with Russia, one of the first matters to which they would turn their attention would be that of throwing open to commerce territories, hitherto closed to trade, of endless commercial possibilities. In the trade thus set in motion Great Britain would have a share of a magnitude in exact ratio to her prestige and to her competitive resources; and these, if there is no decline in the energy and ability of the British merchant in the meantime, would be of just as preponderating a nature as at present.

The trade competition between Great Britain and Japan will, in the ordinary course of events, increase year by year by reason of the peculiar advantages of Japan over other countries in geographical and racial qualities. Other countries must necessarily feel the effects of this competition, but that the Japanese will use any other than legitimate means to enlarge the scope and character of their commercial undertakings is improbable. Such action would bring them at once into conflict with the rest of the world, and that would be in every way

detrimental, if not ruinous, to the best interests of the Japanese nation. The exploitation and development of the boundless resources of the Chinese Empire by the Chinese can only be carried out for the benefit of the world when reforms have been introduced from abroad which will alter the entire system of mandarin government, for one which will infuse new vigour into the corrupted sources of national life. The one people equipped for this work are the Japanese, but to carry it out they require the assistance of the West, represented in the alliance by Great Britain.

If that alliance is not renewed Japan will form one with another country. She will not run the risk of a second coalition being formed against her now that she is on the threshold of a mighty future. Germany, with great and growing interests in the Far East, would eagerly seize the opportunity of concluding an agreement with Japan which would give firm security to her tenure of territory and her commerce out there, and at the same time forward her aim of expansion at our expense. There is at the present time a party in Japan which has always been favourable to the idea of a close friendship

with Russia, and the reaction of feeling which will follow the war may make that party a powerful one if Great Britain shows a reluctance to follow the course of policy which has brought about in such a short time so many changes which cannot but work for her benefit in the scheme of world politics. If Japan has to seek elsewhere for an ally, a mortal blow will be struck at our power in the Far East.

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